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THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

Published quarterly in the interests of African solidarity, and as a forum for Marxist-Leninist thought throughout our Continent, by the South African Communist Party

No 100 First Quarter 1985

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ONE HUNDRED ISSUES OF "THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST"

A Special Message from Comrade MOSES MABHIDA, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party

This is the one-hundredth issue of *The African Communist,* a journal born in struggle that has not only survived the harshest of repressive conditions, but has grown and developed over the quarter century of its existence. It is dedicated to the high ideals of Marxism, the complete ideology uniting theory and practice, and to the urgent need of African solidarity.

Today, the South African revolution stands at a momentous threshold — the Pretoria regime is no longer strong enough to defeat the revolution; the revolution is not yet strong enough to defeat Pretoria. The people have seized the initiative, using every form of struggle to challenge apartheid tyranny.

In the forefront of this struggle is the battle of ideas. The literature we publish is an integral part of the common cause of the people's struggle, a component of organised, planned, and integrated work. The first, 28-page cyclostyled edition of *The African Communist,* said:

> "This magazine has been started by a group of Marxist-Leninists in Africa, to defend and spread the inspiring and liberating ideas of Communism in our great continent ... Africa needs Communist thought, as dry and thirsty soil needs rain ..."

In the 25 years that have passed we have done, and will continue to do, our share in spreading the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism throughout our continent.

Over this quarter of a century we have seen momentous developments in Africa, the liberation from colonialism of all but the southern tip — South Africa and Namibia. But it is here that the future of the whole of Southern Africa, if not the whole of our great continent, will be decided.

Imperialism, the mortal enemy of African progress and independence, spearheaded by the war-mongering Reagan Administration in the United States, is on the offensive. In our region the apartheid regime has become the storm-troopers of this offensive; once again the blood of African patriots stains the soil of our motherland.

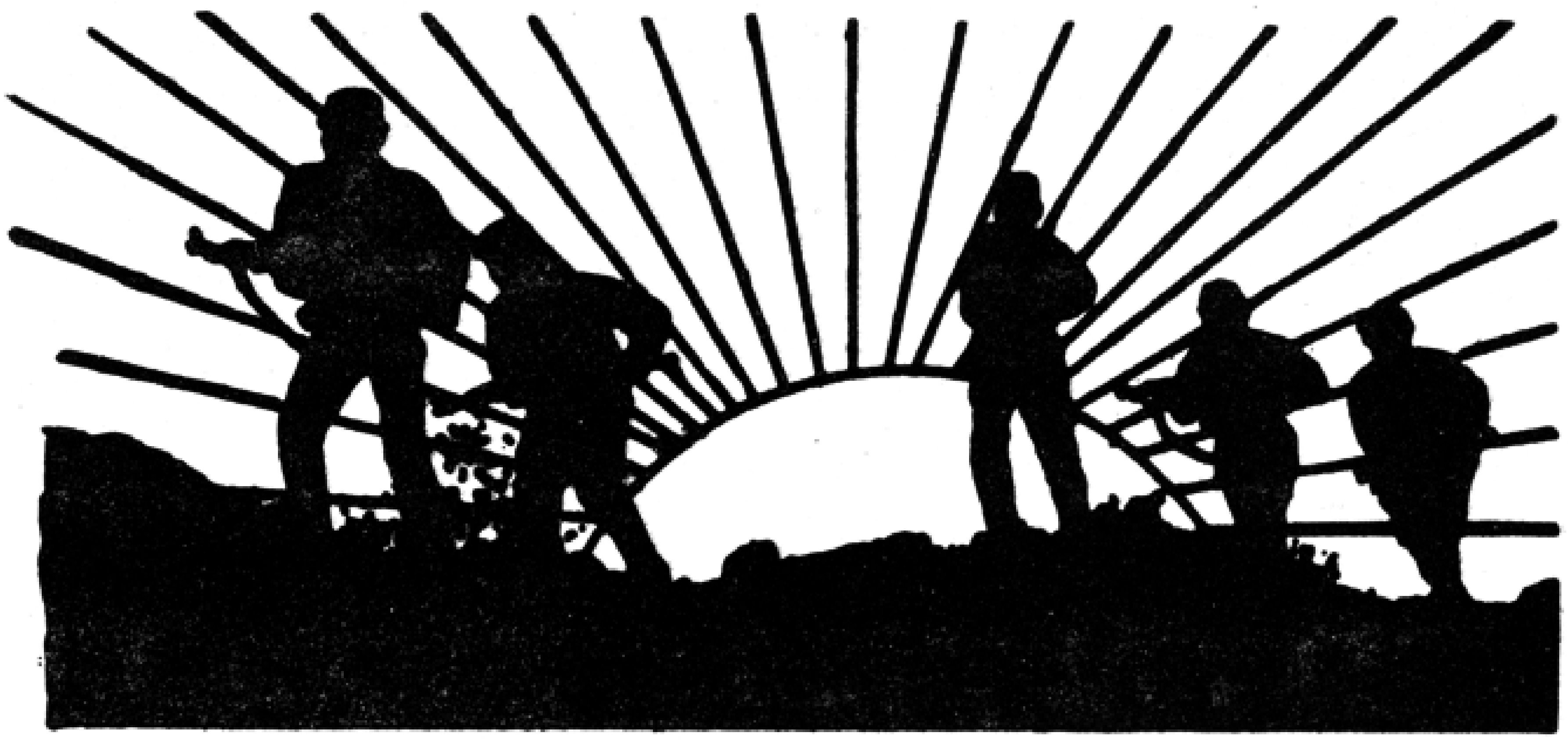
Never before has the need for African unity been more imperative; never before has the need been greater for all the independent states of Africa to consolidate independence against imperialism and colonialism of every kind; to place at the head of their common agenda the elimination of the remaining bastion of racism and colonialism on our continent — the Pretoria apartheid regime.

Liberating Ideas

Our enemy, the enemy of humankind, hates us because of the ideas for which we stand, the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism. *The African Communist,* published without interruption since its birth, distributed in our country under the most hazardous conditions, provides a forum for such ideas, not only in South Africa, but throughout the African continent.

The journal has, over the years, analysed and reported on a wide range of topics — colonialism, the trade union movement, national and class struggle, true independence from neo-colonial exploitation, the question of the emancipation of women, and much more. One vital area of work for progressive humankind is the peace question. It is the task of all who love life to build and strengthen the peace movement to ensure that the nuclear holocaust US imperialism is intent on unleashing upon the whole of humankind does not come to pass.

We take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the men and women who have contributed so unstintingly to produce the one hundred issues of *The African Communist.* In the life-and-death struggle that lies ahead, *The African Communist* rededicates itself to the task of spreading and stimulating the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism in the fight for a socialist society which will bring peace and end all forms of social injustice and exploitation.



EDITORIAL NOTES

BOTHA! YOUR TIME IS UP!

There has never been anything quite like it in South Africa before — the revolt of the people that spread through all sections and in all centres during 1984. Giving the lie to the claims of the Botha regime that their "reforms" will promote peace, a mighty tide of mass political action has rolled across the country, drawing in ever wider sections of the population. The scale and intensity of the resistance to apartheid tyranny have demonstrated the absurdity of the time-worn official explanation that the mass upsurge is the work of "communist agitators" or "professional trouble-makers". Law and Order Minister Louis le Grange came nearer the mark when he held "revolutionary elementts" responsible for the disturbances which racked the townships of Sebokeng, Boipatong and Sharpeville in October. On October 24, Sebokeng was surrounded by 10,000 troops and police with armoured cars, helicopters, dogs, tear gas, whips, truncheons, plastic batons and bullets. Police searched 20,000 houses in a single day in a bid to find these so-called "revolutionary elements" who were said to be causing all the trouble. Between 350 and 500 people were arrested during the course of the occupation, but there was apparently not a single "revolutionary element" among them, because not one was brought to court on any charge under the security laws. And when the police and military withdrew, the revolt continued and spread wider, culminating in a highly disciplined and well-organised general strike which paralysed industry throughout the Transvaal — the biggest and most effective action of its kind ever to take place in South Africa. As the chairman of the Transvaal Stay-Away Committee which organised the strike, Mr Thami Mali, declared:

> "No amount of intimidation can stop us on our way to liberation. We cannot go back now. Our duty as the oppressed people is to step up resistance and create an ungovernable situation".

President Botha's hopes that his new constitution would enable him to convince his critics that he is now ruling by consent have been blown sky-high. Events have shown that he can only continue to rule by the gun, which he continues to use with reckless abandon at the cost of hundreds of killed and wounded. However, the people are daily demonstrating that they are no longer prepared to be ruled in the old way. Consciousness of the need for a meaningful change in social relationships, and determination to struggle, and if needs be to die, in order to bring about this change is now planted deeply in the collective mind of the masses. The ideals of the Freedom Charter burn brightly in every breast. A resolution passed in 1955 has grown into the goal of revolution in 1985. The decades of propaganda and campaigning, of suffering and sacrifice, of purposeful and directed action by the ANC, SACP, Umkhonto we Sizwe are bearing fruit. The people are on the march. One of the conditions of revolution indicated by Lenin has been achieved:

> "Among the proletariat, a mass sentiment favouring the most determined, bold and dedicated revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has emerged and begun to grow vigorously".
>
> ("Left-wing" Communism — an Infantile Disorder.)

No doubt other conditions for revolution still have to be achieved. But 1984 nevertheless was a year full of achievement and promise.

Failure of the Military

The roots of revolt in South Africa go deep into our history. In fact there has never been a period of acquiescence, though the fires of resistance have sometimes flared fitfully. But in the recent period the upsurge of popular revolt in the early 1970s which culminated in the Soweto and connected uprisings of 1976 forced the South African ruling class towards the realisation that a military solution would not suffice and that some sort of political accommodation would have to be found to shore up the crumbling edifice of apartheid. Even the military were saying that they could only contribute 20% towards the achievement of a peaceful solution, and that the remaining 80% must be found in the political sphere.

The outcome of their thinking was the new constitution, whose main aim is to divide and rule.

The new dispensation for Coloureds and Indians is based on two main principles:

— the continued exclusion of the African 70% of the population from any participation even in the formal structures of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

— the attempt to disrupt and, if possible, destroy the unity in action of the oppressed black masses by drawing the Coloureds and Indians into an alliance with the white minority on racist terms and under white racist control and domination.

In addition, the new constitution was designed to enable the regime's imperialist backers and supporters to claim that their policy of "constructive engagement" was showing results — that South Africa was moving — albeit slowly — on the path of gradually abandoning the shape, form and content of white supremacy and domination.

To give the constitutional sham a coating of respectability, a referendum was held amongst the white electorate in November 1983. Not surprisingly a majority of those who went to the polls voted "yes", since they knew very well that what was proposed did not entail any real change in the substance of racist ideology, policy and strategy. But an analysis of the referendum figures shows that even the whites were unenthusiastic about the new constitution. Of the eligible white electorate, 25% abstained, 25% voted no, and the "yes" vote was supported by only 50%. Premier Botha claimed a huge victory, but in fact his new constitution has the declared support of only 50% of the white electorate.

No referendum was held amongst the Coloured and Indian voters for obvious reasons. A "no" vote would instantly have killed the new constitution stone dead, since it would have been clear it was being imposed on an unwilling electorate and an unwilling people. In August 1984, however, elections were held for the Coloured and Indian chambers in the new parliament, the idea being that even if candidates were returned on a minority vote they could still work the new machinery. And indeed the new constitution was massively rejected. In the face of a sustained campaign by the media, police intimidation, widespread arrests and the use of violence against activists of the United Democratic Front who were campaigning for a boycott, the official figures show that only 18% of the Coloured voters and 15.5% of the Indian voters went to the polls. In reality the boycott figure was even higher since there was widespread abuse of voting rights in the rural areas and in the use of the so-called 'special' votes which allowed the elderly and the sick to cast their votes before polling day. The true feeling of the Coloured and Indian people was revealed in the urban areas where the bulk of the working people live and in some of which the poll was a derisory 4%.

The election result was an immense victory for the progressive and democratic forces, and in particular for the United Democratic Front which had spearheaded the boycott campaign. Prime Minister — now President — P.W. Botha responded predictably:

> "These wreckers have nothing but revolution and violence to offer, and when action is taken against their ringleaders they shout to high heaven ... A considerable percentage of Coloureds are not yet interested in exercising political rights".

It is true that the Coloured and Indian people are not interested in exercising the political rights offered them in the new constitution, because these 'rights' are valueless. White domination is entrenched at all levels in the new Parliament, and the will of the Coloured and Indian chambers can be safely ignored or overridden. White South Africans should also bear in mind that their own white chamber has been devalued and its powers diminished, because the centre of legislative power has been transferred to the President's Council and the multitude of Cabinet committees, sub-committees, commissions and all the other paraphernalia through which the State President is now enabled to frame and implement policy. The rights and privileges enjoyed by the whites under the former system of bourgeois parliamentary rule are now at the discretion of the State President and his all-powerful State Security Council. To the extent that it ever existed, Westminster-style democracy in South Africa has now been killed off.

The Resort to Force

Premier Botha accused the UDF of using blackmail, threats and intimidation to cow the voters in its boycott campaign. To be sure, there was a campaign of blackmail, threats and intimidation, but it came from the side of the racist regime and its agencies and hangers-on, not from the UDF. The leaders and scores of activists of the UDF were arrested under the no-trial detention laws, UDF members and supporters were beaten up by the police with sjamboks and truncheons, peaceful protests were broken up with tear gas, rubber batons and lethal bullets, UDF meetings were banned. Yet despite all the repression, the UDF, with over 700 affiliated bodies representing 2½ million people, emerged as a powerful, well-organised, disciplined and highly politically conscious organisation fully capable of mobilising the masses in action. Through its national and regional structures it held hundreds of meetings, produced thousands of leaflets, posters, stickers and other propaganda material. Working night and day and canvassing from door to door, the activists of the UDF campaigned to collect 1 million signatures to a petition opposing the fraudulent parliament. The Coloured and Indian collaborators of the regime were totally exposed and isolated.

Effectively the UDF transformed the "elections" into their opposite. The election campaign, far from serving the interests of the South African ruling class and foreign monopoly capital, galvanised and united the oppressed blacks and democratic whites and administered a firm rebuff to the racists and imperialists. In a bid to recover lost ground, the regime tried to smear the UDF as a front for the banned ANC and SACP, resorting to crude anti-communism in a futile attempt to smother the people's opposition to apartheid. The stooge Matanzima regime in the Transkei Bantustan went even further and banned the UDF outright, revealing the true intentions of its paymasters in Pretoria. But these tactics cannot succeed. The intensity and scale of popular resistance to apartheid far exceeds the capacity of the regime to conceal it.

The real dilemma of South Africa's racist rulers was highlighed by the uprisings which occurred in townships such as Evaton, Sharpeville and Sebokeng in the Vaal Triangle during 1984. The basic cause of the revolt was mass poverty and deprivation, rendered more acute as the year went on by increases in rents, bus fares and the prices of basic commodities, while wages lagged behind and the number of unemployed soared over the 4 million mark. The people took to the streets in protest, and scholars and students boycotted their inferior schools and colleges. As the police moved to take action, barricades were thrown up in the streets to halt the progress of the hippos and armoured cars. "Community councillors" and other puppets of the regime were attacked and their homes set on fire. Nor was the revolt confined to the Vaal Triangle. In every province of South Africa, in every main centre, the flames of revolt were lit and soared ever higher into the air.

The regime responded by sending in the army to back up the police, thus clearly demonstrating that the "total onslaught" of which President Botha has been prattling for years is, not by "international communism" against South Africa, but by the racist regime against its own people. During

September and October alone it was officially admitted that 81 people had been killed and hundreds injured as a result of action by the police and military. The true casualty list is far higher, while unknown numbers of people detained under the security laws simply "disappeared" in the best traditions of the Latin American fascist dictatorships. The regime banned indoor political meetings in 21 areas throughout the country (outdoor meetings without permission are already banned) and placed severe restrictions on funerals of those killed. Nevertheless the mass demonstrations and funerals continued. In Daveyton, on the East Rand, for example, the people openly defied an order banning the funeral of students killed by police bullets and as they interred the bodies, made speeches condemning the constitution and sang ANC freedom songs including "Hamba Kahle Umkhonto" (Go Well Umkhonto), the marching song of the people's army.

Unity of Action

In all these mass actions, workers and students, parents and children, showed a remarkable degree of unity. On the trade union front there has been an extraordinary level of activity. In the first half of 1984 the number of strikes exceeded that for the whole of 1983. Later in the year, for the first time since 1946, the mineworkers struck work and once more the police and army were called in to bludgeon them back to work, a number of workers being killed. At a time of high unemployment, retrenchment and mass deportations, and in the face of police terror, arrests, torture, imprisonment and the threat of death, the use of the strike weapon by hundreds of thousands of Africans has indeed been an act of heroism.

Above all it has been the youth, the students at school and university, who have conducted a prolonged campaign against, not only inferior education, but also the terror tactics of the regime and its hirelings. Every effort has been made to subdue them, from expulsions to the use of force, but the number of striking students steadily mounted until the whole Bantu education system was faced with collapse. All in all, it has been calculated, well over 1 million students joined the schools boycott during the year, and the regime was forced to make a number of concessions in a bid to get the schools and colleges open again.

The mass protest of the oppressed was registered in every sphere of life — by "illegals" resisting eviction from their shantytowns, by commuters resisting increased bus fares, by villagers resisting confiscation of their "black spot" and deportation to the Bantustans. The countrywide upsurge complemented and was inspired by the consistent and successful armed actions of units of the people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe, which attacked institutions directly connected with the new parliament and other symbols of oppression. MK has shown that it is the flesh and blood of the people, that its bases are not outside the country but in the heart of the townships, that armed revolutionary struggle is not only possible but indispensable of the further development of the revolutionary assault on the citadels of apartheid, for the conquest of power by the people and the ending of national oppression and class exploitation.

Through their militant mass struggle the people of South Africa have given their answer to the Nkomati Accord. Peace will not be brought to Southern Africa by racist bribery and trickery, by aggression against the frontline states and intensified repression at home. An aroused and politically conscious people will not be appeased by fake concessions, by dummy parliaments and Bantustans. Only the elimination of injustice, the creation of a free and democratic South Africa on the lines set out in the Freedom Charter will bring peace to our tortured motherland. And the people are showing that they fully understand the need for struggle. Since the ruling class is unable and unwilling to satisfy the desires and aspirations of the majority of the population, the people must needs create the future of their dreams through their own strength. If it is true that no force is as strong as an idea whose time has come, then it is clear that the future belongs to the ideas which were planted in the soil of South Africa when the ANC and the SACP were formed in the early years of this century.

1984 proved that the day of liberation has dawned. It may indeed be a long day, but it is already close to high noon. For Botha and all his ilk it is now clear there is no escape

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SOUTH AFRICAN AGGRESSION MUST BE HALTED!

In an editorial note "What the Nkomati Accord Means for Africa" in *The African Communist* No. 98, Third Quarter 1984, we warned that the Accord was "the fore-runner of worse pressures, worse aggressions to come, for all the frontline states. And it should be a warning to prepare!"

Not least we should have addressed this warning to our own people, as the events later in the year demonstrated. The South African regime rests on the suppression by force of the majority of the people of the whole subcontinent, and it is inevitable that, so long as this basic contradiction continues, the regime will be a source of aggression against its own people and the peoples of neighbouring states. There can be no peace so long as apartheid survives.

The African National Congress has indeed been compelled since the signing of the Nkomati Accord to withdraw its personnel from Mozambique except for a token diplomatic mission of 10 in Maputo. But the activities of the South African-backed bandit group MNR in Mozambique have been vastly extended since the Nkomati Accord was signed, leading to further destabilisation of the Frelimo government and the eventual signing of the Pretoria agreement on October 3.

As announced by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha in the presence of representatives of Frelimo and the MNR in Pretoria on October 3, the following "basis for peace" had been worked out between the parties:

1. Samora Moises Machel is acknowledged as the President of the People's Republic of Mozambique.
2. Armed activity and conflict within Mozambique from whatever quarter or source must stop.
3. The South African government is requested to consider playing a role in the implementation of this declaration.
4. A commission will be established immediately to work towards an early implementation of this declaration.

Statements by the two Bothas made it obvious that South Africa looked on the declaration as opening the way for the inclusion of representatives of MNR in the government of Mozambique and that South Africa was and is prepared to use its military forces to monitor the implementation of the agreement and the consequent shift of ideological balance for which it has been working in Mozambique. Nor is this objective of the South African racists confined to Mozambique. Precisely similar tactics are being used to promote the aims of UNITA in Angola and opposition groups in Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

In other word, South Africa is arrogating to itself the right to dictate to Mozambique, Angola and the other frontline states what type of government they shall have and what policies and ideologies they shall follow. And South Africa is making it plain that, with the backing of its imperialist allies, it is ready to use force to achieve its objectives if diplomatic methods should fail. Indeed, in his Defence White Paper presented to Parliament last April, South Africa's Minister of Defence General Magnus Malan, boasted that it was precisely South African aggression that had paved the way for the Nkomati and Lusaka Agreements.

As the Nkomati Accord has revealed, South Africa's ambitions grow by what they feed on. Shortly after taking office as Minister of Defence in 1966, P.W. Botha, now President, said that in the fight against "terrorism", South

Africa "should carry its influence over its borders". (*Rand Daily Mail*, April 4, 1968.) What limits does the Botha regime accept either on its ambitions or its methods? During September 1984 the biggest military manoeuvres since World War 2 were held in the Northern Cape, codenamed Exercise Thunder Chariot. The divisional commander in charge, Brigadier George Kruys, was quoted as saying afterwards: "South Africa has become expert in blitzkrieg-type warfare and intends getting better at it". (*Star*, September 10, 1984.) Three days later Defence Minister Magnus Malan added that the exercise had shown that "we could go right through to Cairo". (*Star*, September 13, 1984.)

Clearly the time has come for the world to administer a decisive rebuff to the ambitions of the South African racists. They must not be allowed to run amuck in Africa. They must not be allowed to murder and destroy either in their own country or in the frontline states. South Africa's apartheid policy has long been branded as a threat to international peace and security, but it is high time to acknowledge that for millions of people in Southern Africa that threat has long become reality and that the racist regime has been responsible for death and destruction on a massive scale both at home and abroad.

The South African racist regime must be called to account for the crimes it has committed against humanity both in war and peace, for its repeated violations of the United Nations Charter and the various UN declarations on Southern Africa. The hard-won independence of African states, the liberation of the oppressed people in South Africa and Namibia, must not be sacrificed to the ambitions of Botha, Malan and the establishment they represent.

History has proved that it is only ceaseless struggle thaat will bring lasting peace and security to the peoples of our subcontinent through the overthrow of the apartheid regime. In this struggle we know we can expect no help from the western powers who are "constructively engaged" with our enemy. But we look with confidence to the independent African countries, the socialist countries and progressive forces everywhere to do all in their power to strengthen the ability of the frontline states to resist South African pressure and to assist the peoples of our region in their fight for freedom and independence.

CAPITALISM AND FREEDOM DON'T GO TOGETHER

President Reagan was re-elected President of the United States last November on the platform of "patriotism abroad and prosperity at home", Behind the slogans, however, American reality is quite different.

The Reagan administration prides itself on being the defender of the "free world" against Soviet "imperialism". At a gathering of fundamentalist preachers in Florida in March 1983, Reagan said the main question of our time is not the arms race but the fight between truth and lies. The US, he said, was defending itself against the "aggressive impulses from the empire of evil" whose headquarters were in Moscow. The call for a nuclear arms freeze, he said, was a deception which would deliver the US into the hands of its enemy. At about the same time Richard Pipes, a US government specialist on Eastern affairs, attempting to outdo the President in bellicosity, said that if "the Russians" did not give up communism they would have to face the prospect of going to war; and US military specialists were calculating that in the event of a nuclear exchange the Americans would come out better than the Russians with losses limited in a first strike to about 20 million, which was not unacceptable.

At the time that Pershing 2 missiles were being installed in Europe, capable of hitting their targets in the Soviet Union within 6 minutes of launching, US Secretary of Defence C. Weinberger declared that the USA could best be defended by action beyond its borders, while Reagan admitted that the US was active everywhere in the world not to defend just anyone's interests but "to defend ourselves". The defence of "freedom" in the United States, it seems, can only be achieved through world conquest and domination. Only the Soviet Union and its "satellites" stand in the way.

At the time of the American Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, the 13 states which rebelled against British rule stated:

> "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it...When a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security".

The United States was born of revolution against tyranny, but today stands opposed to any revolution against tryanny, anywhere. It supports only the forces of counter-revolution, of restoration of the old order of privilege, the maintenance of the capitalist system at all costs. Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl support Poland's Solidarity trade union not because they love labour but because they hope to be able to use Solidarity as an instrument to overthrow the socialist system. While spending millions of dollars to help Solidarity subversion in Poland, Reagan was sacking thousands of his air controllers and smashing their union because they had dared to go on strike. In Britain Premier Thatcher invoked the jingoism which accompaned the Falklands war to brand miners as the "enemy within" because they dared to strike in defence of their jobs and the future of their industry.

The hegemonism of United States foreign policy is not a new phenomenon. As early as 1823, a mere 47 years after the American revolution the fourth president of the United States, James Monroe, enunciated the doctrine which bears his name warning off the European powers from intervention in the affairs of the western hemisphere. No further colonisation of the American continents would be tolerated, he said.

> "The political system of the Allied Powers is essentially different from that of America...We should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any part of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety".

Note that Monroe was not so much concerned with upholding the rights of the peoples of the Americas to independence and freedom as with safeguarding "our peace and safety". And the United States has continued ever since ruthlessly to promote its own interests at the expense of local populations not only in the western hemisphere but throughout the world. It is standard US doctrine that what is good for General Motors is good for America and what is good for America is good for the world.

History of Aggression

In pursuance of the Monroe doctrine the United States has itself colonised and neo-colonised the various countries of the western hemisphere:

1836: Incorporation of Texas (formerly part of Mexico).
1846-48: New Mexico and California ceded to the US after a war.
1880s: US gains control of construction and maintenance of Panama Canal.
1898-1902: President McKinley orders the occupation of Cuba.
1903: Theodore Roosevelt orders the invasion of Panama.
1906-1909: US troops sent to Cuba to support reactionary regime.
1909-1925: US marines occupy Nicaragua.
1914: Invasion of the Mexican port of Vera Cruz.
1916: Expedition to punish Mexico.
1914-1934: Intervention in Haiti.

916-1924: Occupation of Dominican Republic.
1917-1923: US intervention in Cuba.
1918-1921: Invasion of Panama.
1919: Marines invade Honduras.
1917 and 1920: Nicaragua invaded under pretext of guaranteeing elections.
1926: New occupation of Nicaragua. US troops withdrawn in 1933 following installation of dictator Somoza.
1947: Marines sent to Panama.
1954: US military advisers aid coup in Guatemala.
1960: New invasion of Panama.
1961: US instigates invasion of Bay of Pigs, Cuba.
1964: Invaders return to Panama.
1965: Invasion of Dominican Republic.
1973: CIA organises overthrow and murder of Allende in Chile.
1983: US invasion of Grenada.
1984: CIA mines Nicaraguan ports and organises invasion by "contras". US aids murderous regimes in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, etc.

Nor is United States hegemonism confined to the western hemisphere. US political, economic and military interference, aggression and terrorism are global. The US claims that it is acting in defence of the "free world" against Communist aggression. But the effect of US policy and action is to open up the markets of the world to exploitation by US monoply capitalism. North, Central and South America, including Canada, are wholly dominated by US capital. US warships bomb Lebanon and patrol the Persian Gulf to protect what Reagan calls "our vital interests" — oil, Arab oil, which accounts for 40% of total US consumption. The apartheid regime in South Africa is backed by the US government for reasons of anti-Communist strategy and in order to guarantee the continued supply of minerals vital to the US economy and war machine.

In their "Declaration of Democratic Values", the so-called "London Charter", adopted at their summit meeting last June, the heads of state of the seven major capitalist countries, including Reagan, Thatcher and West Germany's Kohl, declared:

> "We believe in the rule of law...We believe in a system of democracy which ensures genuine choice in elections freely held...We look for co-operation with all countries on the basis of respect for their independence and territorial integrity, regardless of differences between political, economic and social systems...We believe in the need for peace with freedom and justice. Each of us rejects the use of force as a means of settling disputes".

No word in this declaration condemning South Africa, which illegally occupies Namibia, slaughters tens of thousands in Angola, Mozambique and other frontline states and denies the franchise to the majority of its own population. And no word condemning the United States for its brutal invasion of tiny Grenada, whose population of 110,000 Reagan declared a threat to the security of 230 million Americans.

The London declaration also contained a panegyric on the virtues of the capitalist system,

> "In which enterprise can flourish and employment opportunities can be available for all; in which all have equal opportunities of sharing in the benefits of growth and there is support for those who suffer or are in need...We reaffirm our determination to fight hunger and poverty throughout the world".

What hypocrisy! Earlier in the year, a 112-page report of the Citizens' Commission on Hunger in New England reported that hunger had returned to the United States because of unemployment and the government's monetarist policies. The educationists, physicians, religious leaders and social workers who conducted the study concluded that malnutrition has also spread to new groups of Americans.

> "We have found that hunger is widespread and increasing. We have found concrete evidence of hunger in every state we looked at. Hunger is widespread enough from a medical perspective to be an epidemic".

Citing federal figures to show that more than 34 million Americans now live below the official poverty line, the highest proportion since 1965, the commission said:

> "Hunger in America is no longer confined to the traditionally poor. They have been joined by other Americans, those who were not poor and not hungry several years ago".

A similar story can be told of every capitalist country. In all, the numbers of unemployed are rising, and the gap between rich and poor widens. In Britain last July a report issued by the House of Commons Social Services Committee showed a widening gap in infant mortality between rich and poor. Still births or death in the first week of life, always regarded as an indicator of a nation's health, are becoming increasingly class and race related, the report stated. Babies born into unskilled working class families are almost twice as likely to die as those born into professional families.

In South Africa, though it is obvious that the gap between rich and poor is widening in the wake of mass removals, increasing unemployment and rampant inflation, it is difficult to quantify comparisons because no adequate statistics on African births and deaths are kept. However, papers presented to the Carnegie conference in Cape Town last April estimate that the infant mortality rate among Africans is 31 times higher than among whites, that 1 million Africans have no income at all, and that poverty amongst Africans is increasing, not diminishing, as the regime claims.

In Africa as a whole United Nations figures show a decline in food production per head of population. During the past 20 years, over 70 countries of the underdeveloped world have witnessed a net decline in food production per head.

Whose "vital interests", then, are being protected by the policies of the ruling class in the capitalist countries? Who gets the benefit of the programme of exploitation, plunder and bloodshed implemented by Reagan, Thatcher, Botha and their friends in the name of "freedom and democracy"? Not the mass of the people either in the developed or underdeveloped world, whose standards are falling. Only the handful of tycoons who own the means of production and their hangers-on, the scribes and pharisees who brainwash the masses with the aim of preserving the status quo.

It is in order to prevent progressive social change that Reagan and Thatcher are arming themselves for war. It will help to lessen the fear and danger of war if the realisation is spread that the fight for social change, the achievement of socialism, is the best guarantee of peace.

§§

"Women, we can no longer remain in the background or concern ourselves only with domestic and sports affairs. The time has arrived for women to enter the political field and stand shoulder to shoulder with the men in the struggle".

From *An Appeal to African Women — Join the Struggle Against Oppressive Laws,* by Josie Mpama, *The South African Worker,* January 30, 1937

§§

A MIRROR OF OUR TIMES

The African Communist's First 25 Years

By Toussaint

This journal first appeared 25 years ago. In some places, survival over 25 years is not remarkable. But for South Africa in our times, such survival ranks as something of a miracle, as well as a tribute to the qualities and dedication of the many comrades of our party and others, who have taken part in the writing, publishing and distribution of it.

No one could claim that the year 1959/1960 was anything other than the worst of times for the birth of a new political journal. South Africa was moving steadily into the black era of censorship and suppression. The growth of the illiberal society into a fully fledged police state, with all the panoply of imprisonment without trial, torture as a systematic weapon of state, and outlawry for every voice of dissent, was near its zenith. Many of the earlier press voices of opposition to apartheid had been banned or persecuted into oblivion.

If the times were unfavourable for the launch of any political journal, they were doubly unfavourable for a Communist journal. The Party had been outlawed since 1950; its members, almost to a man, had been "listed" by Government liquidators, banned from all public activity and all membership of organisations, prohibited from attending gatherings of two or more people with any "common purpose"; unable to write, publish, be published or quoted anywhere by anyone on any topic. In China, I once read, there is an ancient curse — "May you live in interesting times!" *The African Communist* was born to live in "interesting times."

The birth was not an earth-shaking event, the first edition produced on a hand duplicator in numbers severely limited by the medium.

> "This magazine", it declared, "has been started by a group of Marxist-Leninists in Africa, to defend and spread the liberating ideas of Communism in our great continent, and to apply the brilliant scientific method of Marxism to the solution of its problems."

RHODES UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Nowhere in the journal is the imprint of the Communist Party or any acknowledgement that it had been produced, written and cyclostyled secretly in South Africa. Though, on the surface, it might seem that this obscurity was being maintained to provide some measure of legal immunity for the publisher and distributors, in fact legal immunity had played little part in the decision *not* to disclose the Party responsibility. The decision was overwhelmingly political, deliberately taken by a Party Conference held underground some months before. The Suppression of Communism Act had been on the statute books for nine years. It made the dissemination of Communist and Marxist-Leninist views illegal and subject to heavy legal penalties, whether such views were put forward by the Communist Party or anyone else, and regardless of how "innocent" or "responsible" the source which claimed responsibility for the dissemination. This was fully understood by the Party when the journal was launched.

New Party Formed

But the Party itself stood in a somewhat ambiguous position. The Suppression Act had outlawed it in 1950. The then Central Committee of the Party, acting on a legalistic and probably mistaken interpretation of clauses of the Act, had formally dissolved the Party at the same time. The act of dissolution had never been cancelled or revoked. But within a short time of the legal dissolution of the Party, the most revolutionary elements had constituted a new Party underground, and in secrecy. No public announcement of its resurrection had been made; obscurity, it was decided, would enable the new embryo to grow to some state of maturity which would not be achieved if the existence of the new Party were known to the authorities and hunted down before it had learnt to survive in the new conditions of illegality. Maintaining secrecy about the existence of the Party had, in fact, been written into the new rules of membership adopted at the first illegal Party Conference, and maintained ever since.

Yet the Party, secret, undeclared, its existence perhaps suspected but never revealed, had made considerable headway. Its membership had grown and been organised into functioning secret units. But, parallel with the secret organisation, its members participated openly in the still surviving quasi-legal political forums — in the national liberation organisations, trade unions and local community associations. Many indeed held leadership positions in these bodies; most of them were known as Communists from their public association with the Party before dissolution; most of these were still regarded by their colleagues as Communists, even though the existence of the Party was still undeclared.

But once the Party had constituted itself anew underground, with functioning leadership and membership organisations, the matter of proclaiming its existence to the public and of making a bid for mass support forced its way to the forefront. The Party Conference of 1958 debated the matter at length. The issue proved to be more controversial than can now, looking back, be well understood. Proponents of publicising the Party's resurrected existence argued that the Party's role of leading the people towards socialism could not possibly be effected without a public presence. The argument of principle was not — could not be — challenged. Its logic was undeniable.

But though all at the Conference were agreed on this, they divided sharply on the timing of the announcement. Should it be done now, or postponed? If done now, would it not lead to an inevitable unease — perhaps an open rift — between our members and the mass liberation and trade union bodies in which they swam "like fish in water", since these bodies would feel their own precarious legality prejudiced by Communist participation in their ranks? Would the timid or the anti-communist elements in those bodies not take the opportunity to distance themselves from the Party and from all those known Communists from a former time?

It was argued, too, that the disclosure that a new Communist Party was in existence and functioning would inevitably loose a new police and state hue-and-cry, and provoke increased severe surveillance and persecution. But this was a minor element in the debate; members had operated and survived in the underground for months, many for years; it was not the *legal* but the *political* repercussions of the debate which proved decisive.

The division at the Conference — and in the Party group discussions on it — revealed a difference of opinion over the relationship between work in the national liberation organisations and other clandestine Party work. The numerical division was too deep for any consensus to be reached; and the Conference realised full well that, although the rules made the majority opinions binding on the minority, there could be no general acceptance of a change without a substantial majority for change. And that was not, at that time, attainable.

A Compromise

Yet the issue was not purely formal, or administrative. It went to the heart of the Party's struggle to regenerate itself as a leading force in the dissemination of socialist ideas, and in the development of the South African struggle for a socialist order of society. On these basic purposes, both sides of the debate were united. A compromise proposal, put at the Conference, reflected both the Party unity on these aims, and the division on the tactic of maintaining secrecy: It was — as Issue No 1 of *The African Communist* proclaims — to produce a Marxist journal, spreading Marxism on the African continent; but not to reveal the existence or guiding hand of the Communist Party.

Issue No 1, cyclostyled in limited edition, was warmly received. In the desert atmosphere of South African politics at the time, it came to all liberation activists like a breath of fresh air. It had been written, collated and distributed clandestinely in South Africa entirely by members of the South African Communist Party. And its very success, the eagerness with which copies were snapped up and passed on despite the legal penalties for possession of "Communist propaganda", meant that the next issue would have to appear in far greater numbers. Hand cyclostyled apparatus had already been outgrown. If the demand was to be even partially satisfied, a printing press would have to be found.

But the liquidation of the Party in 1950 had also been accompanied by a liquidation of assets. The still embryonic new party possessed no printing plant capable of the task of producing a magazine, and no sympathetic printers capable of producing clandestinely anything more than a small leaflet. It was realised that if the journal were to be printed, it would have to be printed outside South Africa and smuggled back into the country. With the aid of a group of our Party comrades who had emigrated to Britain, the arrangements were quickly completed. The Communist Party of Great Britain came to our aid. A member of that Party, the late comrade Ellis Bowles, made himself available to us as the nominal publisher in Britain. And issue No 2 thus appeared, printed in Britain, but totally written and edited secretly in South Africa and smuggled back into the country for distribution. The Editorial Board established by the Party in 1959 remained totally responsible for all written and editorial matter, and all distribution in South Africa, until the declaration by the Verwoerd regime of a State of Emergency in 1960.

The State of Emergency which followed the Sharpeville massacre and the ANC call for a national strike and the burning of passes, created critical emergency conditions for the Party and the Editorial Board. In the wholesale arrests ordered by the Government, many of the writers, editorial board members and distributors of the journal were imprisoned without explanation or charge — along with thousands of other freedom fighters. Crisis conditions created new problems. Nevertheless the journal appeared during the State of Emergency, though later than scheduled. The Party

Central Committee too, somewhat depleted but still in functioning order, met and reviewed the situation.

Inevitably the earlier decision to maintain complete silence about the Party's existence had to come under review, as many of the circumstances which influenced the earlier debate had suddenly changed. Martial law, mass imprisonment without trial and the suspension of civil rights had, overnight, produced precisely that reign of terror which some of the advocates of secrecy had warned would follow the Party's public announcement of its existence. More importantly, Emergency decrees had ended the fragile legality of the premier liberation organisation, the African National Congress; and the ANC leadership had responded from clandestine headquarters in the underground with a declaration that it would carry on the organisation illegally until liberation was achieved. Already two of the country's most respected leaders, Oliver Tambo and Yusuf Dadoo — the latter a prominent member of the former legal Communist Party — had been sent abroad by their organisations to establish a representative foreign mission of the liberation front, and thus a voice in the outside world for the mainly underground South African struggle.

The Party Central Committee decided that the balance had thus swung decisively against the arguments for continued silence. In the midst of the State of Emergency, the first public proclamation from the illegal party announced that the Communist Party had been resurrected and lived amongst the people. *The African Communist* followed. In its issue No. 3, produced also during the State of Emergency, the previous formula explaining the origins and purpose of the journal was amended.

> "This magazine", it now read, "has been started by the South African Communist Party, to spread the liberating ideas of Communism ... etc."

The acknowledgement that the journal is the official organ of the South African Communist Party has appeared on the frontispiece of every issue since that date.

Production continued, through and after the State of Emergency, on the same basis as before. All editorial matter was prepared and vetted in South Africa and sent to Britain for printing. The printed journal was smuggled back for clandestine distribution in the country. While circulation grew inside South Africa, the journal began to attract a small readership also outside the country, especially in Africa wherever English was read or spoken. The group in Britain — the Ellis Bowles part — carried an ever-growing burden of responsibility for the distribution to this non-South African readership.

Even after the State of Emergency formally ended late in 1960, the police state apparatus and power remained. Crisis and disruption were never far away from the Editorial Board or its writers and distributors. But over the years since the 1950 Suppression Act, the party and its cadres had learnt how to work and survive in the underground.

The Rivonia Arrests

But in 1963 the pattern of work of *The African Communist,* like the pattern of work of the Party and the whole liberation movement, was suddenly disrupted by the widely publicised Rivonia arrests of a sector of the movement's leadership in one of the operational centres. The arrests spread further and further with a series of trials of our activists on the basis of "evidence" obtained by systematic torture of detainees in conditions of solitary confinement for indefinite period.

No sector of the liberation movement escaped without a severe mauling, and the prospect of the total destruction of the leading cores of the Party and the ANC became real. The leadership had to take emergency measures to maintain whatever could be preserved of their organisations — even in strategic retreat — so that they could return to fight another day. In this critical situation, the remnants of our Party apparatus could no longer manage the editorial tasks of the journal. Reluctantly — and as part of the retreat to a new base from which the struggle could be continued — the Central Committee decided to transfer editorial responsibility for the journal to an external Editorial Board. The new Board kept the journal in production, without any break in continuity. Its task has been to continue to act as the official organ of the Party, and to seek to draw as much of its material as possible from the cadres of the underground still in South Africa.

That arrangement continues to this day — the journal's 100th issue. But now the tide has turned. The mass people's struggle which seemed in 1963 so near to eclipse rises now, year by year, to a new pitch of intensity. The conditions which made an Editorial Board in exile a matter of survival — not choice — are being demolished by the rising struggles inside South Africa. The time and opportunity for the return of the Editorial Board and editorial direction once again to South Africa cannot now be far away.

Despite all handicaps, during these difficult years this journal has flourished. Its circulation inside South Africa, in Africa generally and in the outside world, has grown steadily with every issue. That growth has long outstripped the resources of the small band of comrades who had managed the distribution in the 1960's with the aid of some comrades of the

Communist Party of Great Britain. It would not have been possible without the magnificent contribution which has been made by our comrades in the German Democratic Republic, who have assisted with various aspects of the printing and distribution of the journal worldwide. It is perhaps as much a tribute to them and their selfless solidarity action as to our own comrades that our journal is now everywhere known and accepted as the authentic voice of South African communism. There are few countries of the world, and indeed no country in Africa where English is read or spoken, where we do not have readers and subscribers. Even in those places where venal anti-communist governments, with encouragement from United States officials, have declared communism and our journal taboo or prohibited, it circulates now and is read. It has become an important participant in the debates going on everywhere on the future of the peoples of Africa, and in the development of the Marxist-Leninist view of Africa's road and problems.

Lenin, in his organisational plan for the development of the Bolshevik Party which laid the basis for the Russian revolution, put the production of the party journal *Iskra* right in the forefront. *Iskra* would become the vehicle for the development and support of Marxist views; it would serve to draw together the disparate Russian Marxist groups into a single united organisation and so act as a political-organisational centre for the revolutionary element of the working class. It would be too much to claim as great an achievement in South Africa by *The African Communist.* And yet, in its own way, the journal has served the same purposes. It has put Marxist-Leninist ideas before a people held behind the iron curtain of apartheid education and censorship; it has carried the political thinking, analysis and direction of policy to the scattered and often out-of-communication groups of underground workers; it has provided a basis for the unity in outlook and action of such groups. *The African Communist,* in its own way and its own country, has tried to follow in *Iskra's* footsteps.

What We Said

Let me turn from the purely production/distribution aspects of these 100 issues to the contents. If the production aspects mirror the vicissitudes and crises of the past 100 issues, so too do the contents. There is an immediacy and passionate sense of involvement in the earlier issues produced under fire from within South Africa. Although those feelings continue through later issues, it is noticeable that following the transfer of the editorial centre, a cooler, more dispassionate manner crept into the tone of some articles which become accordingly more analytical and probing than those of earlier issues.

However, the substance of the journal's political message has remained unchanged.

Inevitably appraisals of particular situations have shifted subtly over the years. "What shape will the new Africa take?" asked Issue No 1. "Will it be capitalist ... or socialist ...? That is something the peoples of this continent will have to answer themselves ..." The early issues return repeatedly to this theme, with the caution that, though everywhere there is talk of "African socialism, liberation can end in a way not intended. Where the intention of the liberation movement has everywhere been to democratise Africa, already parts of liberated Africa show signs of a drift towards individual dictatorship. Where the intention was to break the economic stranglehold of imperialism, already far-reaching concessions to foreign imperialist investment are being made."

But the consistent message of the early issues is that the course of development of independent Africa — whether it is to be socialist or capitalist — depends on the immediate actions of the people and the extent to which they are able to organise leading socialist parties of the Marxist-Leninist type. There is a constant sense that the issue is open: socialism is a real and immediately possible choice. Gradually, in the later issues, the view of the continent shifts; the realisation creeps in that objective factors like the level of internal development and the extent of foreign pressures must also be taken into account. Only a minority of African governments proclaim their adherence to socialism, and it is now clear that the socialist path for most of Africa is more formidably barricaded than was perceived in 1960.

There is thus, in the articles over the years, a lessening of the heady optimism of the 1960 period, and a rise of a more hard-bitten dedication to a prolonged period of struggle before the continent opts for socialism. Africa, formerly treated as an almost embryonic new society with every opportunity and choice before it, is now more frequently seen as a continent divided by class and ideology. Perhaps in its 25 years the journal could have paid more attention to detailing and analysing the influence of *outside* pressures, the bribery, corruption and economic pressures of imperialism and neo-colonialism in tipping the balance between socialist and capitalist orientations; or the direct intervention and subversion of governments and individuals by the CIA and similar agencies of imperialism.

In one area of continental political affairs this imperialist intervention has been consistently documented and exposed. That is in the area of trade unionism. The early issues placed considerable stress on the development of an All African Trade Union Federation. The AATUF carried most of the hopes of the 1960 writers for a decisive socialist orientation for Africa

> "Two essentials for the accomplishment of this historic destiny", says an article in issue No 1, "are firstly the absorption by the masses of revolutionary workers of Marxist-Leninist theory, which is the rich, concentrated essence of the experience of the international proletariat. Secondly, the organisation of the working class into effective mass organisations ... Towards this the foundation of the AATUF is a notable and historic contribution."

The early issues continue with the theme of optimism on the role of the AATUF for the future of the continent. But here too, events gradually efface the optimism; the AATUF begins to reflect the ideological divisions of the continent; its bright prospects of hope recede, and it is eventually dissolved. Today the centre of co-ordination is the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity, formed under the aegis of the OAU.

Thus in its political orientation as well as in its organisation, *The African Communist* reflects from period to period the crises through which the movement is passing. As the years of repression in South Africa stretch out, there is a constant dominant theme in the journal: it is that of the fate of our comrades in the front line. There is constant attention to the martyrs, to the freedom fighters killed or executed, the imprisoned, the tortured. The journal is filled with the suffering and martyrdom of South Africa's revolutionaries. One cannot re-read the issues of this period without appreciating the heroism and dedication of our front-line comrades in a period when the enemy is in the ascendant and our movement in South Africa is fighting for its life against all the odds.

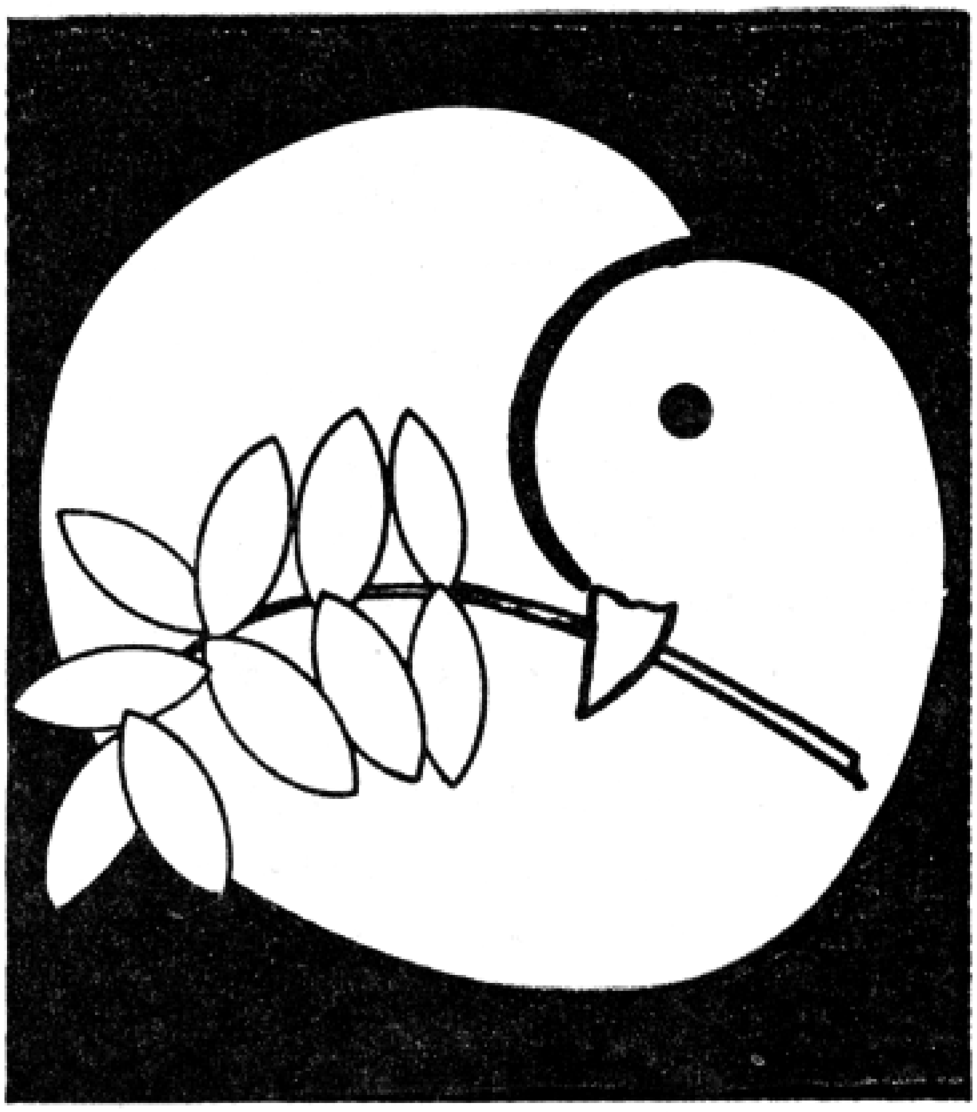
There is another shift in emphasis with the 1976 Soweto uprising. Here, the articles cry out — here is the sign that the tide has turned, that the people have lived through the nightmare of retreat and are once again ascendant. From here on, there is a new tone of optimism — but even more, of confidence that the retreat in South Africa has ended, and that he people are advancing in struggle. Each year since then the tone of confidence rises more strongly. South Africa is on the march! Its people have learnt their own strength.

Each year since then, that confidence sounds more strongly. Whatever else may be happening in Africa or in the wider world outside. *The African Communist* echoes even more insistently with the message that our people are on the march; that our people and our movement have learnt how to struggle forward against anything the apartheid state can do to stop them; that the watershed of the 1960's is past, and our people advance in unity to a new future in a way never seen before in the 25 years of *The African Communist's* publication. A long haul ahead, but still the advance has begun!

It is a matter of some pride to all of us who have taken part in the production and distribution of *The African Communist* that we have forged slowly ahead over these 25 years of vicissitudes. It is a matter of great importance to us that our work in producing this journal throughout the years of these "interesting times" has contributed something — perhaps something important — to the outlook and the thinking of those of our compatriots who today struggle forward, heroically, against the firepower and police might of apartheid.

We feel we have served the cause of our people's liberation in a special, albeit, small way. We have cast some light, however pale, on the problems of our country and our continent.

And now, 100 issues on, we stand on the threshold of a new era, in which without doubt this journal and its editorial centre will continue to play a vital part in the final struggle for our people's liberation.



WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO KAL 007?

269 Lives Were Sacrificed To Promote U.S. War Plans

by Vigilator

Had you booked to fly on Korean Airlines flight KAL 007 on the night of August 31st, 1983, you would have expected to leave Anchorage on schedule, steer a course toward the eastern coast of the USSR and turn southwards before reaching the Kamchatka Peninsula. Safe in the knowledge that your plane was following a well travelled internationally agreed flight-path you would have expected to land safely in Seoul the following morning. You would of course have had no way of knowing that your life, along with 268 others, was about to be sacrificed in a complex and criminal stage-managed intelligence gathering and propaganda operation whose authors sat safely in Washington. An examination of some of the facts of this case (they are too numerous to catalogue in full) serves not only as an irrefutable indictment of the Reagan Administration but in addition is an instructive lesson revealing the true face of imperialism which threatens to sacrifice all our lives on a global flight KAL 007 to nuclear holocaust.

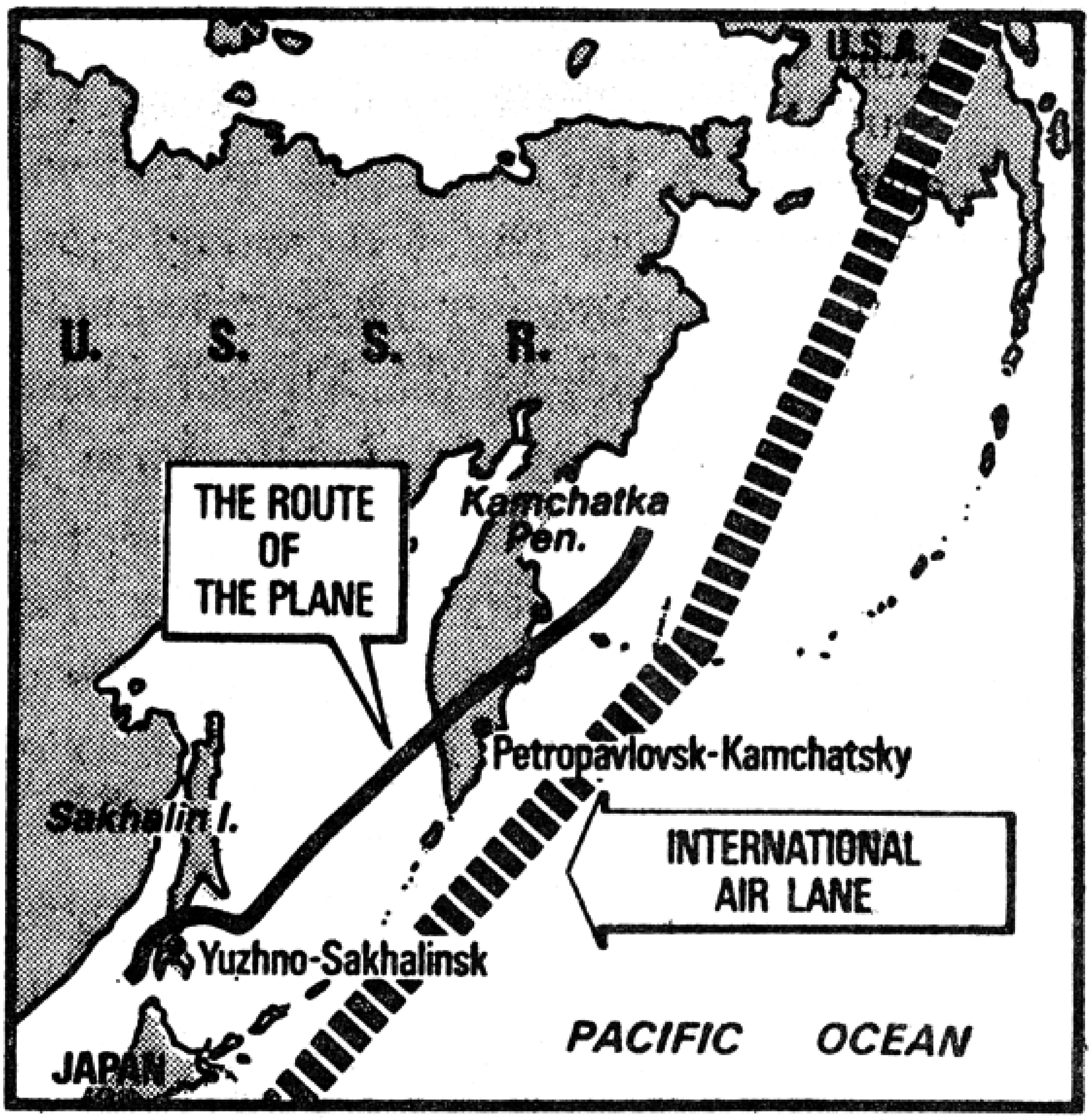
Flight KAL 007, a jet of the Boeing 747-200B variety, had three on-board computerised inertial navigational systems which 'check' each other for faults and which are locked into the flight path before take-off.(1) Should even one computer go wrong the pilot is warned accordingly and the system rules out a navigational error of more than two miles.(2) The flight crew of 29 (there were 11 extra crew members on board to deal with its special mission) would have had to make 10 separate errors in programming these computers for the plane to veer off-course.(3) No problems with the system were reported before or during the flight. Even if it is assumed that all three computers were erroneously programmed the plane's sophisticated radar, which enables its crew to follow coastline and other terrain features, and its radio keeping it in touch with civilian and military air traffic control systems would ensure that it did not stray off-course.(5) But the world has been asked to believe that all three computers, the radar and radio malfunctioned — only for the radio to miraculously repair itself when the pilot reported he had been hit.

The flight was in range of both US and Japanese air traffic control systems obliged under law to warn the crew of navigational errors. One of the 11 military installations in the area which should have warned the flight of its 'error' is the Cobra Judi radar system on the Aleutian Island of Semya. So powerful is this system that it can 'simultaneously monitor the position, motion and nature of more than 200 objects' and can 'spot a baseball at a range of 2000 miles out in space'.(6) The unmanned multi-directional radio beacon located at Anchorage, automatically providing aircraft with direction finding feedback, was mysteriously also out of order from August 31st to September 2nd.(7)

Extra Weight

Flight KAL 007 carried an unprecedented extra 9800 pounds of fuel and for reasons never officially disclosed took off 40 minutes late. But there were reasons for the delay. Firstly the take-off was timed to coincide its flight time with that of the US Ferret D electronic spy satellite and the STS-8 Challenger manned spacecraft launched 86 hours previously at the unprecedented and peculiar time of 02.32.(8) Secondly, the flight was delayed to coincide with the airplane KAL 015 en route from Amsterdam to Seoul which transmitted false radio messages to air traffic controllers on the international air route, misleading them into believing that KAL 007 was on course when in fact it was deep inside Soviet airspace.(9)

Sometime after take-off KAL 007 was joined by an RC 135 Boeing 707 reconnaissance aircraft which flew 'piggyback' fashion, slightly behind and above the passenger aircraft. Interviewed by the *Denver Post*(10), two former RC 135 pilots noted that this plane has a 'super advanced ultra-secure communications system that is linked to the most sophisticated communications system in the world' which 'permits the instantaneous


U.S.A.
U. S. S. R.
THE ROUTE OF THE PLANE
Kamchatka Pen.
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky
Sakhalin I.
INTERNATIONAL AIR LANE
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk
JAPAN
PACIFIC OCEAN

reporting of tactical intelligence to the highest levels of government including the President from any location in the world'. Its mission was not only to confuse Soviet radar systems but also to play a vital part in the intelligence gathering exercise along with the two above-mentioned satellites, another RC 135 flying over the Kurile Islands, two Orion electronic spy-planes, 1 north of Sakhalin and the other over the Sea of Japan, the USS frigate 'Badger' on operational duties near Vladivostok and an E-3A AWACS Boeing in the area.(11)

KAL 007 was piloted by one Chun Byung IN, a former fighter pilot and KAL's most senior pilot who in the course of his 10,627 flying hours had come to know the north Pacific route intimately. It should come as no surprise to note that Korean Airlines is closely linked to the Korean CIA established by the CIA in 1962.(12)

Lights off

Once over Soviet territory KAL 007 switched off all its navigation lights and its 'friend or foe' signal system. Passengers on previous KAL flights interviewed by the Canadian CBS TV network reported that they were ordered to pull down window blinds when approaching Soviet territory and some noticed their craft's navigation lights being switched off and identification marks being all but invisible. The two pilots quoted above noted when interviewed that civilian flights are frequently used on US spying missions.

The aircraft, despite its alleged malfunctioning systems, successfully bypassed Soviet anti-aircraft missile sites and engaged in diversionary manoeuvres (such as rapid deceleration) intended to shake off Soviet fighters sent up to intercept it. By this time the RC 135 which had been flying with it had left and the plane had begun to transmit very high frequency and short signals normally associated with the transmission of intelligence data.(13) Thereupon the pilot chose to ignore 7 minutes of warning cannon fire from Soviet fighters and internationally accepted signals (bypasses by fighters with lowered undercarriages) to fly to the nearest airfield. The termination of the flight by the Soviet interceptors was carried out as a last resort after the plane had been tailed for 75 minutes, this despite their internationally accepted legal right to terminate the flight immediately after completing the necessary warning measures. 'If it had been a military plane', commented the London *Guardian*, 'it wouldn't have lasted 75 seconds'.(14). This long delay enabled the jet to finally crash in the sea of Japan where a flotilla of hastily assembled US and Japanese ships carried out salvage operations.(15) The 'Black Box' flight recorder was reportedly never found.

Propaganda Campaign

From this examination it becomes abundantly clear that the entire operation had premeditated propaganda and military objectives. The loss of the plane was followed by an orchestrated international campaign of hysterical anti-Soviet propaganda entirely at variance with the facts of the case.(16) The shooting down of the plane, screamed Reagan in his opening propaganda salvo, was 'an act of barbarity born of a society which wantonly disregards individual rights and the value of human life'. The propaganda barrage which followed was intended to descredit socialism, the USSR and its consistent peace initiatives. It sought to divert massive popular demands for negotiations on arms limitations, sabotage the Madrid and Geneva peace talks and undermine the mighty Peace Movement, thereby creating the conditions for the deployment of first-strike Cruise and Pershing missiles.

Amid the crescendo of anti-Soviet hysteria and heightened international tension Reagan was able to push through his proposals for the production of MX missiles, chemical and nerve gas programmes. The incident was used to enable the Pentagon to boost its military spending to a staggering 300 billion dollars for the 1975 budget and for Reagan to announce his murderous plans to extend the arms race into outer space. Further it prepared the ground for the US armed invasion of Grenada and increased interference in Central America, as well as adventures elsewhere.

Reagan's 'crusade' against communism requires that imperialism creates the conditions for its crimes to be acceptable in the US and the capitalist world. It requires sophisticated planning and psychological warfare and invariably takes the form of an assault against the USSR and the socialist community, but it also creates the conditions for an attack on all progressive forces. Hence we can see not only how the struggle for peace is inseperable from the struggle for national liberation but also how an attack on the Soviet Union is an attack on us all.

The leadership of the CPSU has frequently pointed to the need for improvements in the methods of propaganda work in the Soviet Union.(17) We should have no doubt that such improvements are being made in the course of building developed socialism in the USSR. To heap criticism at the door of the USSR with respect to this case is, firstly, to fail to understand the nature of the psychological warfare being waged by imperialism and the great advantage it had in this premeditated and orchestrated operation. Secondly, it is to absolve ourselves, the progressive movement, from the duty we have to the USSR and to ourselves to defend the Soviet Union and, in this case, to have more effectively and timeously exposed the machinations of imperialism with the facts long provided by the USSR.

Threat to Peace

The military objectives of flight KAL 007's deliberate invasion of Soviet airspace are clear. Flying over an area of critical strategic importance to the USSR, the flight was designed to activate and then monitor, in concert with all the other craft described above, the defence capacities of the Soviet Union.

In other words, to ascertain the exact nature of the Soviet Far Eastern defence system with a view to paralysing it in the event of a future nuclear strike.

The US has never accepted the idea of peaceful co-existence and competition between socialism and capitalism. On the contrary by attempting to achieve nuclear military superiority it has always set its sights on being able to blackmail and dictate terms to the Soviet Union and progressive mankind. Even more, it has never abandoned the idea of a first-strike nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. The essence of National Security Council Doctrine 68, drawn up in 1950 as a plan for such an attack, remains the basis of US thinking in this regard.(18) Arguing the case for a first-strike limited nuclear war against the Soviet Union American military journals and papers have stated that such an attack should be directed at areas which 'invite the use of tactical nuclear weapons' such as the far eastern USSR to 'tie up Soviet forces in defensive roles'.

"No amount of rhetoric can change the fact", argued one journal, "that the first use of nuclear weapons offers the possibility of paralysing if not obliterating an opponent while 'mutual' suicide remains and hopefully will remain an unproven assumption".(19 and 20)

Flight KAL 007 was not the "most serious failure in the history of US early warning and communications, command, control and intelligence systems"(21) but part of the US's ongoing preparations for nuclear war — preparations which prompted the September 1984 issue of *New Times* to describe the night of August 31st 1983 as 'one of the most fearful moments in the postwar history of mankind' when 'Washington had its finger on the fatal button'; preparations whose root cause lies in the very nature of the capitalist system which endeavours to solve its fundamental contradictions through arms production and the stimulation of international tension. Local and regional wars, massive military expenditures and the nuclear arms race serve the interests of the arms monopolies which secure guaranteed, risk-free super-profits from ever-increasing government arms orders.

Ronald Reagan and his gang in Washington represent the most aggressive and greedy of these arms monopolies. They are the sworn enemy of disarmament, peace, national independence, freedom and social emancipation. The achievement or advance of any of these noble goals in any part of the globe means less money in the pockets of the arms manufacturers and dealers. To avoid this and to secure increasing profits they will go to any lengths including the sacrifice of human life. Although their capacity for harm has been curtailed by the socialist community and world progressive forces, these standard-bearers of capitalism and imperialism constitute a mortal danger to us all and we owe it to future generations to ensure that their evil machinations are exposed and their plans to unleash nuclear war never materialise.

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IS THERE A SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CULTURE?

by GALA

A considerable amount of literary work continues to come from South Africa. Since the decades of the fifties and sixties in particular, the scene of creative writing has been illuminated to varying degrees by such names as Can Themba, Mphahlele, Maimane, Modisane, Rive, Matthews, Nakana, Gordimer, Brink, Fugard, Coetzee, Serote, Mtshali and others. The emergence of the new generation of writers stimulated wide interest in our country's literary past and thus research and thousands of words of commentary, analysis and review brought once more to light such as Sol Plaatje, Olive Schreiner, Mofolo, Dube, Abrahams etc.

All these writers have in one way or another concerned themselves with the realities of our country in its varying aspects and influences, and so their works are included under the collective heading of 'South African Writing.' Writers of course approach their subject matter from their individual points of view, yet writers in societies the least bedevilled by social and economic divisions which might influence their ideas have been able to gain the distinction of contributing to their 'national' literature.

In socialist countries writers have a greater opportunity of producing works reflecting the oneness of their people's lives and characteristics in spite of certain barriers which still might have to be overcome.

What can we say of South Africa benighted not only by class divisions, but by apartheid, racism, national oppression, minority superiority, ethnic and community differences?

The founding fathers of the national movement of the African people of our country said:

> 'The demon of racialism, the aberrations of Khosa-Fingo feuds, the animosity that exists between Zulus and Tongas, between the Basuto and every other Native must be buried and forgotten. We are one people.' (*Short History of the ANC*)

Later the Freedom Charter proclaimed:

> 'All national groups shall have equal rights. All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs: all national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride....'

This recognises that South Africa is inhabited by peoples with distinct historical and cultural backgrounds and characteristics, customs, etc. We need not here go into the question as to which one of them constitutes a nation or not. Let us agree that our population consists of these various communities or groups.

The Right to Equality

There are indeed those who argue that to place any emphasis on this 'multi-national' or 'multi-racial' character of South Africa is to deny the unitary or 'non-racial' objectives of our struggle. But this counterposing of multi-nationalism to non-racialism can only arise out of some mistaken view of the battle to overthrow the rule of apartheid. From our point of view, 'non-racialism' refers to the right of all people to equal citizenship, to political, social and economic rights, irrespective of their *race or 'national' features, history, culture, customs, languages etc.* which will not automatically disappear under a unitary and democratic regime.

The success of the struggle to overthrow apartheid, national oppression, racism, group privilege, guarantees the groundwork for the future unification of all our different peoples into a single South African nation. This amalgamation, we stress, can only happen under conditions of freedom and equality of all groups, but this equality also includes that of their various cultural identities, which of course rules out the racist criteria formulated by the apartheid state.

The Programme of the South African Communist Party (*The Road To South African Freedom*) says:

> 'The state should encourage in particular the unity of the African people and foster the spirit of unity of all South Africans. It should encourage and stimulate the development of healthy, non-antagonistic national consciousness ... It should encourage the development of national cultures, art and literature.'

This is in line with Marxist-Leninist theory:

'The elimination of national oppression ... is possible only under a consistently democratic republican system and state administration that guarantee complete equality for all nations and languages,'(1) and international co-operation 'is possible only between *equals*.'(2)

In the meantime, the struggle to achieve this condition will be reflected not only in our political activity but in artistic efforts as well, and the ravages of apartheid as a reality will continue to be a feature of art and literature from South Africa, even though this feature might reveal individual 'ideological' attitudes of which some 'purists' might complain.

The Kenyan author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has written:

> 'Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even areas of concern by social, political and economic factors in a particular society.'(3)

These 'areas of concern' are reflected in most works coming out of South Africa: everyday experiences; the armed struggle; the political movement; psychological effects, life, love and hate in the racist society. South African writers are stuck with it and there is little they can do but expose it, unless produce innocuous products about moonlight on the veld, or not even write at all until Liberation Day as some gloomily contend.

Forms of Stimulation

Without racism in the USA we might not have had Richard Wright's *Native Son,* or the horrors of World War I might have been ignored had Remarque not given us *All Quiet On The Western Front.* Racism, apartheid or imperialist and colonialist aggression are certainly not encouragers of art and culture, yet on the other hand they have stimulated works of considerable artistic merit and progressive content.

The South African Kenneth Parker observes that

> '... in the area of creativity no less than in other spheres we are confronted with a strange paradox: on the one hand, the existence of an abundance of conflicts (personal as well as environmental) which potentially give rise to art; on the other, the absence of those minimum conditions of freedom which permit the growth of that art.'(4)

Dealing with 'creative writing by black South Africans,' Cecil Abrahams says:

> 'It is imperative that the critic and reader of this literature be aware of the following standpoints: first, that South African black writing forms a separate segment of African literature; second that the fabric of racial discrimination dominates the thematic structure of the writing, they go beyond the generalized attempts at portraying the evils of racism; fourth; that because the writers have been brought up in particular segments or pockets of racism, they are inclined to search out their line of differences within the special expression of their group...'(5)

These standpoints must of course apply to concerned white South African writers as well. For example, in an interview Nadine Gordimer says:

> '... When I write about people, about their private selves ... I am aware that they are what they are because their lives are regulated and their mores formed by the political situation...'(6)

But while it is the movement against apartheid which seeks the unity of our peoples, so literature has a duty to reflect that search irrespective of the restrictions placed upon it. For do not these restrictions represent those placed on the people? Writing in South Africa should not intend only to show the struggle of the people in their various 'segments or pockets of racism.'

The struggle has given rise to unprecedented demonstrations of solidarity among the communities and groups of our country, and the growth of a united front against the racist regime has become a most important feature of the struggle, crossing the barriers of race and cultural differences. So must the writer through every stretch of imagination and talent aspire to the oneness of the democratic and revolutionary principle; to surmount those hindrances which Ezekiel Mphahlele, for example, describes meeting in the course of his career.

> 'I don't know how white people behave in the home when a family member is dead ... I have no way of knowing at first hand how a white child in South Africa grows up.'(7)

Segmented as our people might be, the universality of their aspirations must be a consistent theme in progressive and democratic writing.

The Drama of Struggle

We have no doubt that great writers have through their foresight and talent already supplied important examples of what our literature should be aiming at. Of Olive Schreiner, writing at the end of the last century, it has been said:

> 'What she has done in *The Story Of An African Farm* is to create a lasting symbol of South Africa ... where everyday life becomes a drama played out in a tense multi-racial society; where the individual must conform or engage in bitter struggles against sometimes overwhelming odds.'(8)

As with present day literature, Olive Schreiner wrote against the background of the divided society of her time. Progressive literature from South Africa with its base in the universality of man's aspirations in general and those of our own people in particular, must transcend the group divisions which apartheid tries to force upon society via separate development, Bantu education, bantustans, and the like. Literature should be able to examine our society as a whole. In short, by doing so, writing today will contribute to the founding of the nation of the future.

Stalin observed:

> 'A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people. This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Britons, Teutons and so on ... Thus a nation is not racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people ... a stable community of people.'(9)

Lenin came forward with a more precise definition:

> 'The nation is a lasting historical community of people constituting a form of social development based on the community of economic life in a combination with language, territory, culture, consciousness and psychology.'(10)

Can we not look into the future and see the barriers fallen away under the hammer-blows of progress as our people, having emerged victorious over racist tyranny, national oppression, ethnic or community divisions, commence to build a new life? Can we not dare to bring within the boundaries of our community Marx' and Engels' even longer-term view of the world of the future?

> 'In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.'(11)

Flourishing under the warm sun of the equality of all peoples, our culture, art and literature will intermingle as our liberated peoples will do, blossoming into a South African culture; we shall then read a South African literature, not what is described today as merely literature 'from' South Africa or 'South African Writing.'

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SACTU CELEBRATES ITS 30th BIRTHDAY

The roleof the trade unions in the liberation struggle

by R.S. Nyameko

1985 marks the 30th anniversary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions — SACTU.

Some persons ask: what is SACTU's role?

In the first place we must recognise the historic role played by SACTU in its stand against racism in the trade union movement and its contribution to the organisation of workers in democratic industrial unions. SACTU's commitment to the general struggle against racist exploitation and oppression has played a part in the struggle to mobilise our people against the racist regime and to bring the day of our people's victory nearer.

SACTU has not been banned. It maintains a legal existence inside South Africa, but is forced to work with great discretion to protect its members and followers from the regime.

SACTU has a vital role to play in ensuring that the principles upon which it was founded continue to inspire and give direction to the growing forces of trade unionism in our country. It is for this reason that SACTU can continue to claim to be a legitimate spokesman of the genuine trade union aspirations of the South African workers.

SACTU's main role is to present a radical alternative to the reformist policies adopted by trade union centres with a large black membership such as TUCSA — the Trade Union Council of South Africa, which claims to be concerned with the interests of African, Coloured and Indian workers who actually form a majority of the total TUCSA membership. TUCSA, however, sets its face against any commitment to the movement for majority rule or any alliance with the national liberation movement.

TUCSA has at no time responded forthrightly to the introduction of racist laws, to the cold-blooded murder of trade union activists and freedom fighters, hangings, mass arrests, detentions, to the shooting and brutal beating up by the South African police of African strikers, to the pass laws, forced mass removals.

SACTU is a resolute opponent of TUCSA's collaboration with the regime. SACTU's policy is to promote the formation of progressive, democratic, industrial trade unions and trade union unity. It supports the formation of the trade union centre that is now being contemplated by leading trade unionists identified with the cause of liberation against the apartheid regime. SACTU supports all attempts to bring about unity on the basis of a united front platform against the apartheid regime for the legitimate demands and needs of the workers — higher wages, improved working and health conditions in factories, mines, plants and all employment institutions, for the democratic rights of our people, for majority rule in our country.

White Workers

Some division of opinion exists among many African trade unionists about the correct attitude towards white trade unionists leading unions with a majority of white workers. This doubt does not arise in relation to racist, reactionary trade unions like the Mine Workers' Union and the South African Confederation of Labour — SACLA. The problem arises in the more restricted but very important area of trade union activity represented, for example, by the South African Boilermakers' Society. Some African trade unionists do not regard white workers as members of the working class, but identify them with the rulers of our country and the boss class.

SACTU's position is based upon the principle of unity amongst workers of all nationalities on a common platform in the struggle against capitalism and the capitalist state. Unity is what unionism is all about. Unity of the working class means common action against bosses, capital and government.

Unity rests on a basis of common interests. Wage workers of all kinds carry on a daily struggle for wages, good working conditions and protection against the evils of capital: bad bosses, mean foremen, unjust dismissals, retrenchment and unemployment.

These social evils are present in capitalism everywhere. They arise from the system of private ownership of factories, mines, farms, transport, construction and shops. Private ownership of the means of production is the cause of class struggle between owners of capital and working people who have no property other than their labour power.

We regard as workers all propertyless persons who are employed to produce surplus value in return for a wage which is the cost of their subsistence. A white worker who identifies with the ruling white race is still a worker because of his position in relation to production, just as a worker who votes conservative or joins a fascist party is still objectively a worker. Not all workers are working class conscious at all times, but all workers are class conscious in some situations.

South African workers are burdened also with the hardships placed upon them by the system of apartheid. Group Areas, segregated townships, labour compounds, pass laws, migrant labour, Bantu education and Bantustans are evils found only in South Africa — land of apartheid.

White workers belong to the ruling race and share many of its privileges. Yet they too are workers and suffer class exploitation under capitalism. Their proper place is therefore in the ranks of the working class majority against the evils and inequality of capitalism.

Is unity possible between black and white workers? Many people say that Africans cannot trust whites, whether workers or bosses. The common saying: "Blood is thicker than workers' solidarity" reflects this opinion.

Another view is that the class struggle unites workers of all races against the common enemy which is capitalism. Many years ago the well-known Communist and ICU leader James la Guma argued that when black workers were united in a powerful organisation, the whites would listen and combine with them. This unity is taking shape slowly right now because of the strength of the organised African working class in branches of the economy with large numbers of black workers and militant trade unions.

Metal and Engineering Industry

Only a few years ago white unions in the industry used to put up wage demands for white skilled workers only and take no notice of the black workers' interests. Most white unions still act in this one-sided and selfish way; but there are important exceptions.

Ten metal unions decided at a conference in Johannesburg during March 1984 to form a federation representing black and white workers. Among the unions taking part were the Boilermakers, MAWUSA, NAAWU, CUSA, MAWU and TUCSA's Engineering Union. They represent 200,000 workers in the steel, engineering, metal manufacturing and automotive industries.

Their united force was to enable them to stand up to the strong employers' organisation, the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation (SEIFSA), which fights against militant unions and carries out a programme of large-scale retrenchments that led to the dismissal of 70,000 metal workers in a period of 20 months.

On August 14 the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) and the predominantly white South African Boilermakers' Society voted together in favour of strike action at four divisions and a subsidiary of Anglo's massive Highveld Steel Corporation. The vote and the co-operation of white and black unions that preceded it set a landmark precedent for labour organisation.

During industrial council negotiations earlier in 1984 both MAWU and the Boilermakers refused to accept proposed increases. Management's offer was for 7-13% increases, the same as SEIFSA's offer in the industrial council. This meant a 20c hourly increase for labourers and 40c increase for artisans.

At the first in-plant bargaining meeting after the industrial council the white unions declared disputes over wages. Present were the Boilermakers, the Yster en Staal Unie and the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU). MAWU was not present but at a subsequent meeting it also declared a dispute with management. All unions demanded the right to report back to their membership and meetings of all unions' members were held. Yster en Staal finally accepted management's offer. The AEU neither accepted nor rejected the offer and their position was unclear. The Boilermakers and MAWU opted to take further action. Their shop stewards held joint meetings and decided to go ahead with an industrial action ballot.

The ballot was held over three days. On the first two, the three Witbank divisions (Highveld, Ventra and Rand Carbide) and a subsidiary Trans Alloy voted. On the third day a ballot was held on Mapocho mine.

Legally two ballots had to be taken, one for each of the unions. MAWU and the Boilermakers decided to hold a third ballot for workers who were not members of either union.

The outcome was resoundingly in favour of strike action. Well over 90% of MAWU membership voted in favour. 70% of the Boilermakers voted in favour. In the third informal ballot, more than 400 of the 896 white workers belonging to other unions went against their union officials' instructions and voted in favour of industrial action. Over 70% of the work-force of about 5,700 workers voted for industrial action.

The dispute resulted in increased support and membership for both unions. MAWU signed up 343 members and the Boilermakers gained at least 50 new members who switched allegiance from Yster en Staal and the Mineworkers' Union.

The Boilermakers and MAWU were able to demand that wage negotiations be re-opened from a position of strength. Together, the unions forced the management to re-negotiate.

The issue also generated a split in the white unions. Boilermakers, having placed themselves firmly against management, gained support, while those unions which accepted management offers lost members. Also for the first time, white workers went against express union instructions and voted together with black workers. So there has been a shift away from the pure white trade unionism of unions like Yster en Staal.

For the first time in South Africa, management now faces a united front of both skilled and unskilled and black and white workers. This united action brought all-round victory to the workers.

Mining Industry

In the past months, we witnessed the African miners in action. In July 1984, 1,700 workers at the Penge Asbestos mine went on strike, demanding a R10 per ten-hour shift increase and the recognition of the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (BAMCWU). Other grievances were long working hours and dangerous working conditions.

Penge is owned by the Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company — Gefco, a subsidiary of Gencor.

After 4 days on strike all the workers were fired. Police stood by as workers gathered in the mine compound. They had refused to collect their severance pay. Production was at a standstill. It was only then that management agreed to meet BAMCWU representatives — but negotiations were unsuccessful. The management evicted workers from the hostels saying that since the strike was illegal, workers had dismissed themselves from their jobs. Scab miners retrenched from asbestos mines were recruited. Gefco management offered to re-employ 1,000 workers. BAMCWU demanded that all scabs leave the mine and all workers be reinstated with no loss of pay and at the same rates of pay. Striking miners eventually accepted severance pay and left the compounds.

BAMCWU is concentrating on the effects on the workers' health of asbestosis, mesotheloma, a fatal cancer of the lung lining, and other asbestos-related diseases.

When the NUM first went to the Chamber of Mines requesting access to the mines it was given out that they went "cap in hand". The Chamber has now learned to understand that the NUM is not the same union they thought it was. The NUM has been challenging the Chamber on every front.

Though the primary demand was an increase in wages, the workers demanded a better agreement around the fatal accidents and death benefit insurance. This demand was brought to the fore by the Hlobane colliery disaster — the methane explosion which killed 68 miners. The inquest found that the colliery should be held responsible for this negligence.

Although the gap between black and white mine wages narrowed from 19:1 in the early 1970s to less than 6:1 in 1984, the average black monthly wage of R316 is less than in many industries. The NUM, which claims 70,000 members, won some ground as the Chamber of Mines raised its initial offer in stages from 9.5% to 10.9% to 13.3% and to 14% but the Chamber was then adamant that it would not go higher. NUM's demand for an across-the-board 25% increase would cost the mining houses about R325 million — but this must be compared with the R1,630 million net profit they made in 1983. (*Sunday Times*, 1.7.84.)

The NUM's general secretary Cyril Ramaphose announced their other demands: an 88 instead of 102-hour fortnightly rate, an overtime rate of 7% for weekdays and 8% for Sundays and an improved service increment. The Chamber agreed to a two-hour reduction in working hours.

The NUM did not accept this offer. It had conciliation board meetings in the collieries which are members of the Chamber of Mines. It also declared two other disputes in the Rietspruit and Duhva collieries which are not members of the Chamber of Mines but belong to the Rand Mines group. In all these disputes the union and managements reached a deadlock. The NUM took these reports to the workers and announced that it would hold a strike ballot.

Strike ballots were held on all the affected mines to determine the support for a strike on the nine mines. The ballot result was for strike action. The Chamber of Mines made no satisfactory offer and the NUM announced that it would go on strike on September 17. President Brand, Western Holdings Division, Western Holdings (Welkom), Syplaas, Vaal Reefs East and West divisions, Elands Rand and Kloof Gold went on strike. This was the first legal strike by black workers in South African gold mines. Once again the white racist regime's police forces invaded the mines, murdering and beating African miners. Nine miners were killed and over 500 injured.

There is some cooperation between NUM and the Federated Mining Union. There is a great need for unity amongst the African mine workers' unions to mobilise all black miners not only for higher wages and better conditions of work, but for the removal of job reservation on the mines such as blasting which is still retained through the Mines and Works Act.

Militancy

A trade union is primarily an organisation of wage workers who combine to improve their living standards and in the course of so doing come into conflict with the employing class and the state. The principal weapon of organised workers is a concerted withholding of labour by means of strikes. It is the most important because it is applied at the point of production and if successful disrupts the business of maximising profits.

Strikes are therefore a major index of workers' militancy but not necessarily a measure of political consciousness. Workers in the United States for instance participate in large-scale strikes, but continue to vote for one or other of the two dominant capitalist parties in preference to a Communist or Socialist Party.

The steady growth in the number of strikes in South Africa during the past 10 years has had significant consequences. One of these is the change in labour laws, culminating in the Labour Relations Act of 1981. It removed racial and sex discrimination from the statutes regulating the position of employees in the collective bargaining system, legitimised African trade unions, did away with statutory job reservation in all branches of the economy other than the mining industry and abolished discrimination against women workers.

The number of strikes increased from 106 in 1978 to 394 in 1982, declined slightly in 1983 and resumed its upward swing in 1984. By September 1984 there had already been more strikes than in the record high of 1982. A notable feature is the short duration of the strikes. Most lasted for less than 3 days, suggesting that workers and employers tend to arrive at an agreement on the factory floor or through negotiation with the trade unions.

Limitation of space does not allow us to examine in detail the reasons why workers withhold their labour. The most common cause is a dispute over wages, followed by protests against victimisation and for improved health and safety measures.

Trade Union Membership

Between 1980 and 1983 trade union membership in South Africa increased by 58%. The membership of African unions recorded the biggest increase from 220,000 to 670,000. Of this membership unregistered unions account for 272,000. The number of trade union members is estimated at 1.5 million; another 4.5 million remain to be organised, most of them Africans.

African mining unions made a big contribution to the rise in the size of the organised labour force. Of the 484,000 African miners, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) claims a membership of 70,000 of whom 15,000 are fully paid up. The Union has won recognition in eight gold mines and five collieries. Its recruitment rate averages 5,000 per month. This figure will undoubtedly boom because of the union's successful struggle to obtain safety measures and paid holidays. The NUM is affiliated to the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). CUSA has eleven affiliates with a combined membership of more than 120,000 and is linked to the ICFTU.

Another trade union centre of about the same size is the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). Its main unions are MAWU, MAAWU, NUTW, Chemical W/U and nine other unions in transport, food, etc. FOSATU, though not affiliated to the ICFTU, is funded by them.

A third concentration of African trade unionists belong to the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA). Its total membership in September 1984 was 430,000, a 10% decline from the 1983 figure. The drop was largely due to the withdrawal of the S.A. Boilermakers' Society (54,000 members) and some five smaller unions. TUCSA's 1983 national conference adopted a resolution proposed by the Mine Surface Officials' Association urging the government to ban unregistered trade unions and for registered trade unions to stop emerging unions recruiting their members. The resolution was opposed by two big unions — the S.A. Boilermakers' Society (54,000) and the Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union with 25,000 members (MICWU). It was this that made the S.A. Boilermakers' Society disaffiliate from TUCSA.

The disintegration continued in August 1984 when MICWU gave 3 months notice of its disaffiliation from TUCSA. In addition to outright withdrawals of unions, Africans, Coloureds and Indians are deserting TUCSA unions for unions affiliated to FOSATU and the Food and Canning Workers' Union. This trend conforms to the decision of the Communist Party's policy of encouraging workers belonging to Unions affiliated to TUCSA to join more progressive unions.

Fragmentation is a common phenomenon of trade unionism in its formative years but it has specific causes, which for the most part have negative influences. Personal ambition is a factor. Immature organisers resent being part of a collective and aspire to becoming the man or woman on top. Corruption and dishonesty sometimes impel a person to avoid the consequences of his or her misdeeds by organising a split in the union.

In spite of the declared intention to launch a new trade union federation in early 1985, serious disputes remain unresolved. The most important are a reluctance on the part of some general workers' unions to give the information required by the Feasibility Committee; a system of monitoring foreign funding so as to prevent donors from promoting reactionary and splitting policies; and the extent of participation in radical politics.

Some of these disputed issues can be related to the familiar conflict between 'centralism' and 'autonomy' — between persons who want an authoritative type of federation able to impose decisions on member unions, and persons who lean towards a more democratic system of self-rule.

Trade Unions and Politics

The binding force of common objectives in the trade union movement is both political and economic. Workers of all oppressed national groups are involved in the struggle against capitalism and for national liberation. We note that a large section of the white working class refuses to recognise this reality, preferring to adhere to old taboos and myths like white supremacy and racial purity. Only a small section of the white workers are taking a progressive stand for a democratic trade union movement.

However the mainstream of development in the world at large and South Africa in particular runs in a contrary direction towards the destruction of colonialism and its offshoots, race discrimination, colour bars, segregation and white minority rule. It is only a matter of time before the remnants of a decayed colonial system fall apart and are swept into the dustbin of history.

The symptoms of this process of change are visible to the naked eye. On the labour front the change can be seen in the growth of African unions, the spread of non-racial unions, cooperation between black and progressive white workers, the decline of all white racist unions and the growing strength of the idea of a single trade union organisation embracing workers of all national groups.

In South Africa, where the African working class is voteless and excluded from parliament, collective bargaining can have little effect on the causes of inequality that are rooted in the social structure. Two of these are inferior education and the migratory pass law labour system. Only a social revolution involving the abolition of all forms of discrimination and the establishment of majority rule can put an end to social inequality, exploitation and national oppression.

Increased Burdens

The situation is continuing to deteriorate. Last year's budget placed an increased tax burden on the general public of R3,000 million and hospital tariffs were raised by 50%. (*Cape Argus* 29.3.1984.) Workers have been hardest hit by the latest increases in general sales tax (GST). The regime is using the extra revenue from these taxes to cover the extra cost of its military budget and the fraudulent tri-racial parliament. Mr Johan Maree, a lecturer in industrial sociology at the University of Cape Town, said:

> "The more the government increases taxation on the workers, the less it taxes the wealthy". (*Cape Times,* 24.1.1984.)

While the workers are being impoverished, the employers are ripping off more profits, in spite of the so-called recession. Ovenstones Investments lifted profits before tax to R5.9 million in the six months to August 1984 compared with R4.1 million in the same period of 1983. (*Cape Argus,* 29.9.1984.) Irvin and Johnson, Anglovaal's fishing and processing subsidiary, increased attributable profits to R4.02 million for the six months to December 31, 1983, compared with R3.61 million in the corresponding period of 1982. (*Cape Times* 24.2.1984.) Professor Brian Kantor, of the University of Cape Town, said:

> "South Africa's public corporations are far more profitable than they appear to be. Reports of their large operating losses should be treated with profound scepticism".

Apologists for the racist regime constantly tell people at home and abroad that African incomes have risen. This is a lie, as borne out by the following figures supplied by the Central Statistical Services:

Year	Wage Increase	Inflation
1976	6.2%	9.5%
1977	3.0%	10.0%
1978	1.1%	11.0%
1979	2.0%	12.4%
1980	4.9%	14.9%
1981	2.9%	17.2%

In addition, productivity had risen in 1980 by 4.5% (*SA Review,* 1983.)

Counter-Revolutionaries

As the workers struggle to achieve unity in their campaigns for wage increases, the government and employers have launched a powerful counter-attack against independent and politically active trade unionists, who are blamed as agents of 'resistance', 'communism' and 'revolution'. For this purpose a new organisation known as the Centre for Investigation of Revolutionary Activities (CIRA) has been established. On October 1, 1983, this Centre held a seminar at which the anti-labour campaign was orchestrated. Commissioner of Police General Johan Coetzee, implementing the instruction of Police Minister Louis le Grange that tough action must be taken to combat the increased politicisation of the trade union movement, warned his audience that "whenever a situation of labour unrest exists a revolutionary situation can easily develop ... and that Marxists attempt to transform it into the means of revolution".

Speaking at the same seminar Bobby Godsell, labour adviser to the Anglo-American Corporation, said "trade unions can play a pre-revolutionary role in destabilising the current order and preparing the stage for radical change". Stooge trade unionist Lucy Mvubelo, reflecting the confusion in her own mind, said that "great confusion existed among black workers in regard to their rights and the working of the capitalist system". However, the regime's trouble-shooter Nic Wiehahn tried to reassure the audience by informing them that "preparations are being made to persuade workers that capitalism and the free enterprise system will do more for them than radical movements".

These counter-revolutionaries are unable, however, to reconcile the discrimination which exists under apartheid with the alleged benefits of capitalism. A free labour market simply doesn't exist in South Africa. Africans are not able to sell their labour to the best advantage because the pass laws, influx control, Group Areas Act etc. restrict free movement and compel migrant workers to return to the Bantustans once a year to renew their contracts. These conditions violate every principle of collective bargaining, equal access to jobs, open competition for employment. Workers have no freedom of choice or action. If they get a chance to use the labour laws to protect their interest they may do so but they can have no faith in apartheid structures that oppress them and reduce them to a state of perpetual subordination.

The recently passed laws providing a limited right to strike and granting limited access to industrial councils have hopelessly failed to counterbalance the disabilities of apartheid imposed on all workers because of their race. A police state that harasses, detains and even murders trade union organisers, brutally assaults and shoots down striking workers as during the recent mineworkers' strike, can make no claim to freedom. The African workers are convinced by their own experience that they are unfree and that the benefits of capitalism accrue only to the capitalists. It flows inevitably from the nature of social contradictions in South Africa that the revolutionary struggle is directed against apartheid which is so intimately bound up with the capitalist system. Coetzee, le Grange, Wiehahn and Mvubelo can talk about the virtues of capitalism until they are blue in the face — they will convince no one so long as African workers are denied citizenship and treated as illegal immigrants in the land of their birth.

On the 30th anniversary of SACTU's foundation we can see on all sides that the message that SACTU has been preaching over the years has been welll absorbed by the South African working class. Never has there been so much militant activity on the trade union front. The determination to organise and fight for a better life for all is being manifested everywhere. SACTU's task is to ensure that its presence continues to be felt on the field of battle, to weld its experience with the energy and dynamism of the youth who are in the frontline and the new unions that are being formed.

And bearing in mind not only the efforts of the counter-revolutionaries but also the various forms of economism, "trade union politics" and workerism which are being peddled today in a bid to divert the workers from the true road of revolution, we should remember the words of Lenin in *What is to be Done?* (first published in 1902):

> "Social Democrats (Communists) lead the struggle of the working class not only for better terms of the sale of labour power, but also for the abolition of the social system which compels the propertyless class to sell itself to the rich. Social Democracy represents the working class, not in its relation to a given group of employers, but in its relation to all classes in modern society, to the state as an organised political force."

The trade union struggle serves as a starting point for the awakening of class consciousness which leads to organised struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist system and the spread of socialism. Gen. Coetzee and friends may try to halt this process but, like King Canute, they will fail to turn back the waves of revolution which are rising ever higher in our tortured land.

AHMED SEKOU TOURÉ — AN AFRICAN TRAGEDY

By Phineas Malinga

From the very beginning Sekou Touré was different. Many of the first generation of leaders who emerged in the former French colonies of sub-Saharan Africa had come up along a path carefully mapped out for them by their rulers. They belonged to the tiny minority who benefitted from the French policy of "assimilation". They went to the best French schools and universities. They sat in the French Parliament, even in the French Government. They were intended to function, after independence, simply as a new set of representatives of the French bourgeoisie. Some of them have been doing just that for a quarter of a century.

It was otherwise with Sekou Touré. With only an elementary education, he went to France as a migrant worker. He worked in the post office and became active in a French trade union. He acquired a little further education at a trade union school run by the trade union federation C.G.T. Returning to Guinea, he again became active in the trade union movement, which was then at a very early stage of its development. In 1953, he led the first general strike in the history of the French colonies south of the Sahara. For the first time the French colonial administration had to settle a strike by means of concessions. This victory catapulted Sekou Toure into the limelight and he soon became the acknowledged leader of the Guinean section of the R.D.A. (Rassemblement Democratique Africain — the political party which at that time embraced all the sub-Saharan colonies).

In 1958, aged 36, Sekou Touré had his appointment with destiny. General de Gaulle had offered the French colonies a choice. The first alternative was membership of the "French Community". This meant internal self-government, with foreign policy and defence remaining in French hands and adherence to the franc currency zone compulsory. The bait was economic aid from France and her partners in the recently established European Common Market. The other alternative was complete independence and severance of all ties with France.

De Gaulle undertook a grand tour of the colonies. In one after another, he received the respectful acceptance of his "community" plans from the carefully trained local leaders. Then he came to Conakry. In a passionate speech, delivered in the fuming presence of the General, Sekou Toure declared:

"We prefer poverty in freedom to wealth in slavery."

The people of Guinea followed this lead. Alone among the colonies, Guinea voted "No" to de Gaulle's plan. The French reacted vindictively. Not only were all French technicians, experts, teachers etc. summarily withdrawn, but they even took equipment such as telephones with them. Not only did aid cease but all financial trade facilities. In short, France did everything possible to ensure the failure of Guinean independence.

Planning The Future

Sekou Toure and his comrades reacted not only with courage, but with policies which appeared to progressives everywhere to be impeccably correct. Commerce and industry were nationalised and construction was planned. For the first time in Africa, a national liberation movement endeavoured to transform itself into a vanguard party. This task was not tackled in a superficial way. Aware of the danger of creating a mere city-based bureaucracy, the leaders of the P.D.G. (Parti Democratique de Guinée — replacing the Guinean section of the R.D.A.) took care to extend their organisation into the villages. The party structure was used to mobilise the people for important practical tasks. Appeals went out for voluntary labour to be donated to key construction projects and the people responded. The system of chieftainship was abolished. The dangers of tribalism were perceived and the importance of nation-building was emphasised. The fraternal assistance of the socialist countries was sought and obtained.

These policies caught the imagination not only of the Guinean people, but of many others throughout Africa. The present writer remembers hearing the great South African communist, Bram Fischer, declare his belief that Guinea would within twenty years leave the rest of Africa far behind in terms of progress and development.

Such hopes were destined to be tragically disappointed. The first signs that all was not well appeared within a few years of independence. In 1961, the Guinean authorities announced that they had discovered a "conspiracy of teachers". A large number of teachers and school children were arrested, together with trade unionists and party cadres of left-wing views. Governments of countries where Guinean students were pursuing their studies, including those of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and the GDR, were asked to arrest the students and summarily repatriate them, so that they might be interrogated. Some students avoided repatriation and went into exile. Some remain in exile to this day and still protest that they were sincere supporters of the P.D.G. and the Guinean revolution, unjustly victimised in an anti-leftist purge. The Soviet Ambassador was accused of contact with subversive students and had to be recalled. In the first of many policy changes, Sekou Toure's government scaled down its contacts with the socialist countries and made some overtures to the USA.

In explaining these events, Sekou Toure spoke of "a Machiavellian plan intended to launch a Marxist revolution." This was an astonishing accusation by the leader of a party whose inspiration had from the outset been largely Marxist. To unravel the truth of the matter would be a task far beyond the scope of the present article. There may quite possibly have been a conspiracy. There may have been ultra-left intellectuals who wanted to transform the P.D.G. into a purely Marxist party in which there would be no room for non-Marxists, while Sekou Toure may have wished, and may have been right in wishing, that it should retain the character of a Popular Front. At the least, however, the events of 1961 showed that the position of Marxism in the ideology of the P.D.G. had not been clearly thought through when the party was founded.

The damage on this occasion was nevertheless limited and the period of Sekou Toure's greatest prominence in the international arena still lay ahead of him. In Africa, he was not only of the founding fathers of the OAU, but the leader who above all others made African unity his cause. Certain of the initiatives which he took in this direction — one thinks of the abortive unions proclaimed with Ghana and with Mali — were ill-prepared and counter-productive. Nevertheless, nobody was ever in any doubt where Sekou Toure stood on that issue. The affection in which he was held could only be enhanced by the generous loyalty which he displayed towards other progressive leaders — Kwame Nkrumah in particular — when they fell upon evil days. On every issue which arose on the African continent from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies, Sekou Toure spoke out unflinchingly on the people's side.

His overtures to the USA after 1961 were not prolonged or far-reaching. The implacable hostility of Gaullist France remained a dominant fact in the international position of Guinea and it was not long before the logic of that position began to reassert itself. When Sekou Toure again sought the friendship of the socialist countries it was given ungrudgingly, with no recriminations over the past. By 1965, relations with the Soviet Union had been fully restored. In August, Sekou Toure visited Moscow and was greeted as a leader of "an almost fraternal party". In November, he accused France, Senegal and Ivory Coast of having supported a conspiracy against the government and people of Guinea. Diplomatic relations with France were broken off for the next ten years, while Guinea became isolated from the majority of neighbouring states in Africa.

Mercenary Invasion

Imperialist hostility reached its most vicious height in 1970, when a force of mercenaries, organised with Portuguese connivance in the then colonial territory of Guine Bissau, invaded Guinea and openly attempted to overthrow its government by force. Sekou Toure reacted to all these events with the uncompromising courage which the world had come to expect of him. In 1975 he was able to avenge himself on Portuguese reaction and render perhaps his greatest service to the continent of Africa. When Angola called for fraternal aid against South African aggression, Guinea provided a vital staging post for Soviet and Cuban ships and aircraft on their way to answer the call.

By this time, however, Sekou Toure's international prestige was no longer based upon sound domestic foundations. There had been reasons, even in 1965, when the Soviet leaders felt unable to go beyond the description of "almost fraternal" for the P.D.G. An illustration of its shortcomings occurred in 1967 when a "cultural revolution" was announced. Anybody who suspected that this might be an imitation of what was going on in China at the time would have had his suspicions confirmed by the appearance of a book of *Thoughts of Sekou Toure,* upon which the people were commanded to meditate. Another aspect of this "cultural revolution" was a hasty decision to abolish the French language and give equal rights as official languages to no less than eight local dialects.

Of more fundamental importance was the fact that the P.D.G., in spite of the impeccably non-tribal basis on which it had been founded, had slowly but inexorably taken on a tribal complexion over the years. By the late sixties, it was dominated by Sekou Toure's own people, the Malinke. Worse still, his immediate relations became increasingly prominent in the leadership. One of these, the President's half brother, Ismael Toure, exerted a particularly malign influence during the seventies. An open admirer of the USA and of the "liberal" policies pursued in the Ivory Coast, he was at one time minister for planning, later minister for mining and geology. Towards the end of Sekou Toure's life, Ismael was often described as "the government's No. 2."

It is difficult to assess exactly how much responsibility Ismael Toure had for the turn which government took in the second half of the seventies. At all events, that turn was a disastrous one. Step by step, Guinea moved towards the right. It was natural enough that, once Pompidou had retired and been replaced by a French President less closely associated with the memory of de Gaulle, there should have been a normalisation of relations with France. It did not, however, end with normalisation in a sense acceptable to free Africa; it went on to normalisation in a sense acceptable to French neo-colonialism.

From the time of Giscard d'Estaing's visit to Conakry in 1978, France began to become the dominant economic partner of Guinea, at the expense of Guinea's relations with the socialist countries. So enchanted did Sekou Toure become with his closeness to the government of Giscard that he saw fit to express his support for the forces of the right in two successive French general elections. On the second of these occasions, he backed the losing side and was somewhat embarrassed to find Mitterand, whom he had sharply attacked, in the seat of power in Paris. This embarrassment did not take long to overcome, however, and in due course the two ex-leaders met and got on well together.

Role of the Women

Domestically, an important change of policy took place in 1977. In that year, there were demonstrations against the government in Conakry by women — in particular the "market women" whose small-scale trading is a traditional feature of life in many parts of West Africa. Sekou Toure was shaken by this event, as he had always prided himself on the support which he received from the women of Guinea. He responded by a far-reaching "liberalisation of commerce".

There is much food for thought in this event. It can be strongly argued that the P.D.G. had been over-ambitious in its nationalisation of commerce immediately after liberation. It should be remembered that Marxism does not advocate nationalisation for any dogmatic, idealistic reason. It advocates nationalisation of large-scale industrial production because such production is inherently and inevitably social in its nature and its organisation. Private ownership of a large factory or mine is an aberration. By nationalising it, one is simply bringing legal form into harmony with socio-economic reality. In highly industrialised countries, the trend is for commerce to be carried on by increasingly large and elaborate organisations, so that a stage is reached at which what is true of industry is also true of commerce.

The same cannot be said of a country such as Guinea was in 1958. Commerce was in the hands of individual traders or small firms. Nationalisation did not mean seizing control of an existing machine. It meant creating an entirely new administrative structure to enable commerce to be organised at a level at which it had not been organised in the past. It may have been desirable to do this in order to place the government in a better position to plan the national economy as a whole. But was it practicable? Did it represent the best use of scarce administrative cadres?

There is no doubt that the Guinean revolution failed to produce the economic progress which seemed to be promised in its early years. The reasons are many and complex but administrative inadequacy is among them. It may be that if at the outset tasks had been set which were more carefully tailored to the administrative potential which existed, the results would have been better.

Be that as it may, the complete reversal of policy towards the commercial sector in 1977 was seen as a victory for the Right and left the country without a coherent economic strategy.

The Problem of Tribalism

Another ominous development of the mid-seventies was that the problem of tribalism assumed new dimensions. In 1976, the government denounced a "conspiracy of the Peuls." This was the first time that a particular ethnic group had been publicly identified as hostile to the government. In the repression which followed, the former Secretary General of the OAU, Diallo Telli, was arrested and later died in prison. It was alleged that he was deliberately starved to death by the prison authorities. A large number of the Peul people fled the country and were later said to constitute a majority of the two million Guineans who were living in exile by the end of Sekou Toure's life.

As Guinea moved into the eighties, there was little left of the revolutionary policies of earlier years. Internationally, Guinea's alignment with France was now supplemented by an increasingly close relationship with right-wing Arab governments, particularly those of Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

Here is another theme of some importance in the Sekou Toure story. He was a Moslem and Guinea is predominantly a Moslem country. These facts received little emphasis in the early post-liberation years but much more in the later period. But exactly what role Islam played in the ideology of the P.D.G. was never clearly defined.

The religion (if not always the practice) of Islam is egalitarian and shows concern about questions of social justice. Originating in pre-capitalist society, it has never adapted itself to capitalism to the same extent as the Christian churches have done. In Moslem countries which were colonised by non-Moslems, there was naturally a role for Islam in the national liberation struggle. For these reasons, it was easy for Moslems and Marxists in many countries to find a significant area of common ground. They could set out together for a certain distance along a road which led towards progress. As the experience of Soviet Asia shows, it is possible for this road to lead onwards to a permanently fruitful relationship. But that experience also shows that there are problems to be overcome. There are questions to which very precise answers have to be given. It is no use imagining that Islam and Marxism can simply be mixed in whatever quantities take somebody's fancy. It is no use declaring a theoretical allegiance to both and then following a path which in practice veers to and fro between two allegiances. That, unhappily, is very much what the P.D.G. did.

By the last year of his life, Sekou Toure was completely enmeshed in the net of neo-colonialism. Guinea had acquired a crushing burden of debt to Western and Arab banks. "Investment" by foreign monopolies was the order of the day. In 1983, the congress of the P.D.G. dropped the slogan of "revolution" in favour of "production" (not a bad slogan in itself, but now it meant production for the foreign "investor"). In the same year Sekou Toure went to Paris to attend what was called a "Franco-African summit" — in other words a meeting of France's African satellites.

Another event of 1983 was less important but profoundly symbolic. A certain Jacques Foccart had been in the entourage of de Gaulle in Conakry at the famous encounter of 1958, when Sekou Toure had renounced France. This same Foccart was, throughout the sixties, the secretary of state in charge of African affairs in Paris. He masterminded the implacable policy of revenge pursued by the French government in those years. In 1965, Sekou Toure denounced him at a mass meeting in Conakry as the shadow schemer whose hand could be seen in every attempt to destabilise Guinea. In 1983, Foccart returned to Conakry, as the guest of the President. It was billed as a "reconciliation" and so it was — on Foccart's terms. It is easy to imagine the satisfaction which the French bureaucrat must have felt as he surveyed the result of a quarter of a century of endeavour on his part. It is painful to imagine the feelings of Sekou Toure.

Months later, Sekou Toure was dead. He left behind him a country impoverished, indebted and divided. His historic decision to take Guinea out of the system of French neo-colonialism had effectively been reversed. His dream of African unity was as far from realisation as it had ever been. In short, his was ultimately a story of failure.

It is not difficult to list good qualities in Sekou Toure which contributed to his achievements and faults which contributed to his eventual failure. On the one hand he was courageous, a brilliant speaker and writer, a man with that elusive quality which makes others want to follow him. On the other hand, he was arrogant, lacked capacity for self-criticism and resented criticism from others. His grasp of political theory was not profound, his approach electic and inconsistent.

There Are Many Lessons

For us Marxists, however, history is not primarily the history of individual leaders. The story of Sekou Toure is also, and more importantly, the story of a people and a party. It has many lessons to teach the rest of Africa.

Firstly, it must never be forgotten that the Guinean revolution did not collapse simply from its own shortcomings. It was defeated by a powerful and tireless enemy. The first lesson which the story teaches Africa is, beware of France!

It is easy to imagine that, because France now belongs only to the third rank of imperialist powers, there is little to fear from that quarter. That is a dangerous illusion. France remains far more powerful than the average African country and devotes more attention to Africa than any other imperialist power. Since de Gaulle reformed it, the French political system has been more stable than either the American or the British. The French bureaucracy sets objectives which it pursues unswervingly for decade after decade. The maintenance of the neo-colonialist system in West and Central Africa has been such an objective. Within that general objective, the forcing of Guinea back into the system was a particular objective. If Guinea had succeeded in the long term in beating off this attack, as it seemed in the short term that Guinea was going to succeed, it would have been a brilliant achievement indeed.

Why did that achievement elude the people of Guinea? The answer has to lie in the history of the P.D.G. There would be few more valuable services to Africa than for some qualified Marxist scholar, with access to the documents of the P.D.G., to write its history in detail. The present writer can make only some tentative suggestions.

The transformation of a national liberation movement into a vanguard party cannot be other than a difficult task. There are at least two errors into which it is easy to fall. The first is to take the line of least resistance — to evade all difficult decisions, put something for everybody into the party programme and, in effect, perpetuate the national liberation movement under a new name. The second is to exaggerate the extent to which it is possible to move in the direction of a fully socialist programme. In many national liberation movements, the urban population is much more heavily represented than in the nation as a whole. The urban militant is often tempted to despise the countryside and its problems. Under the influence of such militants, a movement can find itself swept into the adoption of programmes based on the assumption that industry and the urban proletariat are more important than, in that particular country at that particular time, they really are.

Though these may appear to be opposite errors, it is actually possible to commit both at once. The left-wing urban militant whose enthusiasm for Marxism outruns his real understanding of it may start by proving his Marxist credentials with a string of radical proposals in the economic sphere — the total nationalisation, collectivisation of the land and so forth. Having done that and run out of steam, he may then leave a whole lot of other, less "glamorous" questions such as the national question, the language question, the role of religion in society, totally unresolved. The result is a party which is at one and the same time ultra-left in some of its policies and vaguely reformist in others.

The P.D.G. seems to have been such a party. There is no evidence that it began with a profound and realistic class analysis of Guinea in the 1950's, went on to a clear decision as to whose party it was going to be and on that foundation built a coherent set of policies. There is no evidence that it knew what the demands of the peasantry actually were or how the rural economy actually worked. Instead, it devised a series of eye-catching measures of full-blooded socialism, based exclusively on the interests of the urban population, then tried to appease other elements by fudging a variety of political questions. The resulting mixture of policies seemed to work for a time but came apart at the seams when the system was subjected to strain.

It is both an heroic and a tragic story. There is reason to fear that it may have to be told again before its lessons are learned. It would be a bold man who could claim that he knew all its lessons and exactly how the errors of the P.D.G. can be avoided in other countries. One thing is nevertheless clear: there are no short cuts on the road to scientific socialism. There is no substitute for political clarity. At all times we need to know exactly what we are doing, and why, and on behalf of what class.

BOTHA'S REFORMS HAVE NOT CHANGED "COLONIALISM OF A SPECIAL TYPE"

The Struggle for National Liberation Must Continue

by Denga

It is over 20 years since the South African Communist Party characterised the system in South Africa as internal colonialism (or colonialism of a special type). Since then, numerous changes have occurred on the South African political scene. Any concept, no matter how accurate, derives its validity from concrete reality, and should thus be changed when the criterion of its validity — practice — so demands. This is more so with definitions of politico-economic systems, whose relevance and impact transcend mere scientific analysis, but are of necessity the starting point in determining the character and motive forces of the revolution as well as the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement.

Since the turn of the 1980's the ruling class has experienced tremors within, adopting, in the wake of the economic and political crisis, management policies that seem to shake previously held concepts to their very foundations. Naturally, those who have a 'feeling for the new', and indeed, those impatient to have done with the system of exploitation lock, stock and barrel, follow such developments with keen interest — and the results of such studies do not always augur well with the merciless test of practice.

In a creative application of the Marxist-Leninist theory to the peculiar situation in our country, the SACP identifies the typical and the non-typical within the political and economic system. On the one hand, the black population suffers injustices that recall the situation in 'classical colonies'. They are denied the right to participate in the democratic process, and the African majority is denied the very right to citizenship. Wherever they are, blacks are relegated to the most squalid conditions where death and disease are the order of the day. At work, the black labourer is not only super-exploited, but treated as the lowest underdog who has no hope of advancing beyond certain types of jobs designated for him. In the home and the classroom, in the hospital, the mortuary and the grave, the lot of the black people is nothing but underdevelopment and suffering. On the other hand, within the same South Africa, the white minority enjoys not only the right to vote and to stand as candidate for the bodies of power. It is also cushioned off by a host of privileges which accrue from the super-exploitation of the black working people.

At the same time, South Africa is a highly-industrialised country with a developed system of state monopoly capitalism, and a level of centralisation of capital that compares favourably with most of the highly-developed capitalist countries.

Traditional capitalist societies brought in their wake bourgeois liberties that were conceded because the dictates of capitalist exploitation required a worker "free" not only to participate in the anti-feudal struggle, but also to sell his labour power "freely" in the market. These liberties are in the final analysis practicable only in so far as they do not threaten the exploitative system, and at the same time, depend on the balance of class forces. Yet they offer the working people immeasurable scope within which to advance their immediate and long-term interests.

The political relations obtaining in South Africa would, on the face of it, seem to be totally incompatible with the economic system. Looked at in isolation from its historical roots, the political system — which determines who, in the racial set-up, can be owner of the means of production; who, among the non-capitalist classes and strata should occupy what rung on the economic ladder — seems to be an absolute anomaly in relation to the developed and highly centralised capitalist system.

However, these political relations were necessitated by the specific form of the emergence of capitalism. For the coloniser to acquire cheap labour and thus reap huge super-profits, the second-rate status of the indigenous people — a form of extra-economic compulsion — was a necessity. The colonisers therefore shaped the political institutions, the ideas and political relations to reinforce their domination not only over subordinate classes, but over whole nations and peoples.

As the SACP programme states, apartheid as it exists today is a continuation as well as intensification of the colonial relations that obtained before the British transferred power to the local settlers. Its evolvement to modern forms was also determined by many other factors such as the balance of forces between the oppressed and the oppressors, intra-ruling class relations and so on — but in the final analysis, the apartheid system developed in the way it did to serve the capitalist imperative of profit.

From the above, two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, it is this concrete historical approach which leads us to characterise the system as internal colonialism. An attempt to run away from this historical reality leads to such conceptual pitfalls as 'racial capitalism' which smacks of subjectivism in the writings of those who use it. The system is viewed as a product of the evil genius of the ruling classes rather than one shaped on the foundation of concrete, objective historical circumstances. This concept also persuades us to believe that national oppression does not engender antagonistic contradictions which can only be resolved by means of revolution, but that the ruling class itself can remove them if it so wishes!

Correlation between politics and economics

The second conclusion arising from the first is that colonial relations are not mere political relations, divorced from the economic base i.e. from the stytem of production relations. In the first place, colonialism entails not only political conquest but also the central process of economic plunder and the super-exploitation of the subjugated peoples. The political system that emerges is structured to serve the economic base and the combination constitutes the colonial relationship. As the founders of Marxism-Leninism taught, political relations under capitalism reflect the relations between classes, and are structured to serve the ruling class. This correlation is not mechanical for politics plays an independent and active role in determining the form that any exploitative society takes.

The South African political system has as its historical foundation the colonial economic basis. At the same time, the form it has adopted today depends also on the alignment of forces within the ruling classes. While they agree on the basic question of the subordinate position of the black majority, they differ on the forms — the role of 'native reserves' and influx control, job reservation, etc. Since 1948 the system has been shaped to realise the ideals of the "most racialistic and imperialistic sections of the capitalist class"[2] represented by the ruling Nationalist Party. However, all sections of the ruling class contributed their own share in the making of apartheid — no section was a passive onlooker, let alone a serious opponent: all supported the government that secured the system, and set out to cash in, while shedding crocodile tears. Therefore, it would be extremely naive to speculate as to whether or not South Africa would have been more democratic had, say, the United Party won the elections in 1948 or 1953. Internal colonialism would still have been with us.

Political relations in South Africa (which express not only relations between classes but also those between the oppressed people and the minority white community) are completely intertwined with economic relations. The system of racial domination determines the totality of production relations. Ownership of the means of production is determined by the racial litmus paper; relations at the workplace are determined on the basis of colour, for example in the matter of training, skills, the choice of foremen etc. Relations of distribution as shown by the national income are such that the whites (15% of the population) receive the lion's share (64% of National Income in 1977). Relations of consumption are reflected in the wide gap in spending on education, health, cultural amenities and so on. At the same time, the level of development of state monopoly capitalism — state ownership (about 25% of GNP), state consumption, regulation and programming, etc — is far ahead of many developed capitalist countries (where average state ownership is 20% of GNP). As such, secondary production relations (exchange, distribution, consumption) in South Africa not only derive from the relations of ownership but have been beaten into the racial (colonial) shape. State monopoly capitalism grew apace to serve this set-up and to ensure control of strategic sectors, with the military build-up far ahead of the level of development of productive forces, due to the political system.

As in other capitalist countries, South Africa's relatively high level of development of productive forces has long been fettered by the relations of production. The most obvious manifestation of this, as Marx pointed out, can be seen in the recurrent economic crisis and wastage of material and human resources as well as in the resultant class struggle. The specific form of manifestation in South Africa is determined also by the shape of production relations under the impact of the political system. Thus we have an acute shortage of skilled labour in a country where over 3-million Africans are unemployed, resulting in under-utilisation of productive capacities and inability to introduce new technology. Thus also we have excessive militarisation which has its own effects on the material and labour resources.

The acuteness of the contradiction between productive forces and production relations in South Africa is clearly shown by the present economic crisis, which is reflected in the political crisis. Certain aspects of the colonial relations — all of which hitherto worked in the interest of super-profits — *have become an effective brake on the immediate growth of the capitalist economy in particular, and on the development of productive forces in general.* As Engels wrote:

> "On the whole, the economic movement gets its way, but it has to suffer reactions from the political movement which it itself established and endowed with relative independence...
>
> "The reaction of state power upon economic development can be of three kinds: it can run in the same direction, and then development is more rapid; it can oppose the line of development, in which case nowadays it will go to pieces in the long run.../or/...prescribe other lines".

The second and third options "... can do great damage to economic development and cause a great squandering of energy and material".[3]

Of late, the South African ruling class has got into the habit of shouting itself hoarse about 'reform'. Certain adjustments have been made on the labour front in an attempt to obviate the labour 'shortage'; a painfully slow process is unfolding towards the recognition of the permanent status of "urban blacks", as well as the creation of a so-called "middle class" which will have "a stake in the capitalist system to defend." On these questions, all sections of the ruling class (except the landowners) agree, although they differ on the pace and the other details. But while they are at one in opposing the revolutionary forces, differences arise between them on the political perspectives. Thus a section of monopoly capital rejects the new constitution and the bantustan approach in favour of "power-sharing with minority veto" in some federative structure, etc, etc. The question arises: would these alternative policies lead to the removal of colonial relations, of internal colonialism? What is the correlation between revolution and reform in the endeavour to right the historical injustice?

The Antagonistic Contradictions

As indicated above, the level of development of productive forces in South Africa is such that they have long come into conflict with the relations of production. The direct social consequence is the sharp contradiction between labour and capital. There is no doubting that the material pre-requisites for socialism exist in South Africa: a certain level of industrialisation, socio-economic contradictions and the force to carry out the revolution (the working class).

However, as we have indicated the system of capitalism in South Africa has its specific character arising from its colonial roots. Production relations here express more than mere economic relations; they aslo reflect the political position of the various sections of society. For a black worker, the size of the pay packet is determined long before he enters the labour market. At work, the boss is white, and the black worker's position vis-a-vis his white counterpart is determined in the statute books on the basis of his colour. Therefore, the nature of exploitation manifests itself first and foremost in the context of the place he occupies in the racial equation, in the specific way in which production relations manifest themselves under internal colonialism. He therefore not only sees his position on the factory-floor through the colonial screen, but also identifies with the rest of his number who belong to the lower 'caste'. This is not a false consciousness, but a reflection of the most immediate contradiction within Southh African society — between the oppressed people and their rulers.

This is not to suggest that the day-to-day economic struggles of black workers automatically assume a political content. Left on their own these constitute an attempt to get a better bargain for the workers' labour power within the confines of existing colonial relations. However, in so far as class struggle in the political sense is not an abstract 'pure' struggle against an abstract capitalist, but one waged under concrete conditions, the struggle of the black worker for improvement of his condition is inevitably bound up with the struggle for national emancipation from colonial oppression. Only this struggle can secure for the working class the necessary conditions for the emancipation of labour. And in the struggle to destroy internal colonialism, all classes and strata who suffer under its oppression are active participants.

The destruction of internal colonialism means its uprooting both at the political and economic levels, a restructuring of the whole system of production relations, from ownership to consumption. All the major means of production in South Africa are in the hands of the white monopoly capitalists and landowners; and the contradiction between the oppressed and 'their' rulers also includes that "between the working class and the rural masses, together with the middle classes, on the one side, and the handful of monopoly capitalists on the other".[4] Thus, the programme for the national democratic revolution calls for the nationalisation of monopoly industry, appropriation of the landowners and the control of "all other industry and trade ... to assist the well-being of the people".[5] National democracy in South

Africa can only have meaning if it is anti-monopoly democracy. For this to be achieved, the colonial power structure must be destroyed; in other words, there must be revolution.

Do revolutionaries therefore reject reform? There are reforms and reforms. For the revolutionary movement, the struggles for higher wages, trade union rights, educational reform, lower rents etc. have meaning in so far as they help alleviate the conditions of the working people and help create better conditions for achieving the goal of national emancipation. However, by themselves gains in this direction will not accumulate into liberation. They will only affect the form of colonial domination, not its content. That is why such demands should not only be accompanied by mass struggles, but should be linked at all times with the goal of the seizure of power.

The "radical proposals" now being advanced by sections of monopoly capital including "power-sharing" do not aim at the destruction of colonial relations, but at their modification and perfection. Monopoly capital is demanding a political readjustment in order to ensure economic development: reforms from above for the maximisation of profit. If implemented, these policies would at best change aspects of the system of internal colonialism, but leave the majority of the black population occupying the same subordinate position politically and economically. The actual motive of the "radical"bourgeoisie is shown by the fact that they have systematically recoiled from demands that would "rock the boat too violently" in the face of the political crisis.[6]

It is therefore a fundamental error to think that the policies of these sections of monopoly capital will have the effect of destroying national oppression. It is, however, equally 'strange and monstrous' to think that the regime's crisis-management policies make it possible or necessary to jettison the national struggle in favour of 'class struggle against racial capitalism'.

The Alignment of the Forces of Revolution

For any revolutionary movement, a correct analysis of the character of the system must aim at identifying the forces of change as well as those they are pitted against. The system of national oppression in South Africa (internal colonialism), like any other antagonistic system, "has not only forged the weapons that are to destroy it, but also the men to wield these weapons." These are first and foremost the black workers who are the most dynamic and revolutionary force, the landless peasantry, the black petty bourgeoisie and the rest of the middle strata. At the bottom of the pile stand the mass of the African people, "the most oppressed and exploited of all".[7] On the other hand, most of the non-capitalist sections amongst the whites support and actively defend the system from which they gain materially, although, as the Communist Party programme states, it is not in their long-term interest. A few far-sighted individuals amongst them have joined forces with the oppressed and struggling black people.

Do the regime's crisis-management policies disturb the ruling class alliance? Over the years, the Nationalist regime has treated the black community virtually as an irrelevant force in the policy-determination process. The gun and the baton seemed to suffice as arguments. The ever-deepening crisis, however, has drummed into its head the realisation that any ruling class wishing to survive must exercise political and ideological hegemony over a significant number of its subjects — they must "voluntarily" accept the system. The regime now also understands that state power must be restructured so as not to block the economic movement. To this end, 'new' policies have been announced, from the 'three-tier parliament' to the integration of the so-called 'middle class'.

"Great" revolutionaries we would indeed be, if we were to mourn advances made by the people in struggle; but we would be "greater" still if we were to celebrate an obvious tightening of oppression as a sign of the breaking down of the colonial system. Each step taken by the regime needs to be studied concretely and the necessary conclusions drawn therefrom. The response of the working class and the mass of the working people to the regime's machinations is well-known. Even the much-publicised relaxation of Group Areas restrictions on Coloured and Indian businessmen at the beginning of 1984 received a wary response from these forces, for among other things, it poses the threat of 'monopoly invasion of their traditional areas'.[8]

In this regard, the September 1983 Central Committee statement of the South African Communist Party drew the following conclusions:

★ "The concessions to the African workers ... were won on the ground and not in parliament", and they are accompanied by repression and other restrictions. It behoves the Party and the rest of the revolutionary movement to give "effective political leadership to the rapidly growing trade union movement".

★ In talking about the black middle strata, differentiation needs to be made between "the higher echelons of bantustan administrators" (and perhaps also the urban puppets), and the Matanzimas and Sebes within the Coloured and Indian communities on the one hand, and the rest of the middle strata (the majority) which is "more closely connected to the black workers than their white counterparts". The "destruction of the system of national domination is in their interests". While the middle strata in general "tend to shy away from revolutionary radicalism in favour of old-style bourgeois nationalism", it "remains a revolutionary necessity" to win them over to our side.

★ In the bantustans, the "economic plight facing the overwhelming majority of the people ... cries out for organised resistance, a task which demands priority treatment by our whole liberation alliance".

South African political life is in a state of flux. The independent historical actions of the democratic forces have thrown the ruling class into disarray; and the long-drawn-out process of disintegration of old alliances within the ruling class and its supporters appears to be reaching its culmination. A discussion of "colonialism of a special type" cannot ignore this historic process, in particular with regard to its effects on the non-capitalist sections of the white community. The intensification of the armed and mass actions of the democratic majority is forcing the regime to adopt ever tighter authoritarian methods of rule in relation to the white community.

What will be the long-term effects of this on them — a retreat into the Botha laager? What are the implications of the United Democratic Front's attraction into its ranks of forces ranging from liberals to revolutionaries? Have we fully grasped the strategic significance of the UDF slogan, "UDF unites, apartheid divides"? Is it correct to characterise actions for democracy by a section of the white community as "solidarity action" (or in the case of workers, acts of "proletarian internationalism")?[9]

All these are questions thrown up by present-day reality, which have a bearing on the concept of internal colonialism: understanding of the ruling class, its alliances and supporters; and identification of objectively permanent, temporary and even potential allies from 'the other camp'. The aim of any revolutionary movement is not to make enemies, but to win allies.

References:

1. For an elaboration on this see *The African Communist* No. 92, First Quarter, 1983.
2. *Road to South African Freedom* (SACP programme), p. 49.
3. F. Engels to Schmidt in Berlin, *Selected Works* Vol. 3, pp 491-492.
4. *Road to South African Freedom* (SACP programme), p. 52.
5. Freedom Charter.
6. SACP Central Committee Statement, September 1983.
7. SACP programme, p. 32.
8. *The Star* 28/2/1984
9. Khumalo Migwe — "Karl Marx and the Colonial Question," *The African Communist* No. 94, Third Quarter, 1983, p 64.

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

by Du Bois

ETHIOPIA: Formation of the Marxist-Leninist Vanguard

September 6th will be remembered in Ethiopia in the years to come as Party Day, since it marked the opening day last year of the founding Congress of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE). It was the culmination of a long and unique process of party-building in Ethiopia. The task began, properly speaking, in 1979 with the creation of COPWE (Commission for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia) which was charged with the responsibility of mobilising, organising, preparing and "charting the necessary strategy for the establishment of the Party". In this sense, COPWE was not in itself a vanguard organisation, but a transitional political organisation — a prototype of the revolutionary vanguard which had still to be established. Nonetheless COPWE's foundation rested clearly on Marxist-Leninist principles.

In the years since then COPWE undertook measures across a broad front to meet the ultimate objective of creating a revolutionary vanguard party. A cadre policy had to be worked out and implemented with the objective of training, admitting and placing "militants who have made outstanding contributions to the revolution in the political, economic and social fields and through their participation in the armed struggle" in leading positions as the advance guard of the future Party. A large number of basic organisations were set up in strategic areas — among the workers, peasants, cooperative and state-run farms, in state-owned enterprises and the army — to organise and politicise the mass of the people in these areas and popularise the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and their relevance to Ethiopia's future advance. Along with such other measures as the organisation of the mass movements among the workers, women, youth and students, peasant and agricultural workers' unions, COPWE undertook and implemented a bold policy of ideological training by setting up "study cirlces" and providing ideological courses in a number of political institutions under the guidance of COPWE cadres.

The process of Party-building was of necessity lengthy — ten years following the overthrow of the feudal and reactionary monarchy of Haile Selassie in September, 1974 — because of the unique conditions under which the revolution captured state power. Although it was mass discontent and popular action which undermined the ancient order presided over by Haile Selassie, no mass movement emerged as an organised force to lead Ethiopia's peasant and working masses. In the event, the only organised force was the army, which deposed Selassie. In the first two fragile years of the revolution conservative elements within the armed forces continued either to resist the change demanded by the mass of the people or deflect it into reformism, attempting thereby to maintain the old power and social relations under a new guise.

Turning Point

The decisive turning point came with the capture of power by progressive officers within the armed forces led by Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam and the setting up of a revolutionary political authority — the Provisional Military Administrative Council. In 1976 the PMAC and revolutionaries among the workers and intelligentsia proclaimed their goal and programme for the establishment of a national democratic state through a broad-based revolutionary alliance. An indispensable condition for the consolidation of such a revolutionary state was clearly seen then — the establishment of a vanguard party of the Leninist type. It was to counter determined opposition from reactionary quarters to the creation of the political, ideological and material basis of an advance to socialism that the Ethiopian revolutionaries set up COPWE. The opposition came from extreme nationalists, monarchists, the remnants of the feudal aristocracy, ultra-leftists, counter-revolutionaries and also from secessionist groups, primarily in Eritrea.

Allied with these groupings was the external threat to the revolution which took the form of the invasion of Ethiopia by Somalia and the backing of the secessionist movement by the most reactionary Arab states and US imperialism. All these extraordinary circumstances called for extraordinary measures — a prolonged period of Party building, of involving the toiling masses in meaningful participation in the construction and consolidation of the Ethiopian revolution.

The culmination of this process was the historic founding Congress of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) on the tenth anniversary of the revolution on September 9, 1984.

According to the rules adopted by the Congress, the WPE is a Marxist-Leninist Party based on the principles of scientific socialism and whose organisational basis rests on democratic centralism. The Party has the supreme responsibility of leading the Ethiopian workers and peasants in their efforts to complete the national democratic revolution and lay the material and political basis for the advance to socialism. The WPE is the Party of the foremost representatives of the peasant and working peoples allied with all democratic and progressive social forces and strata in Ethiopian society.

The draft rules of the WPE were discussed in every district and region in the country where primary organisations were functioning and more than 300 amendments were submitted to the Commission (COPWE). The founding Congress was attended by some 1,742 delegates from 14 provinces in Ethiopia as well as by representatives from 40 countries including the Presidents of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Yemen. Among the invited guests were the President of the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo, and the President of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma. The South African Communist Party was represented by a delegation of two — Moses Mabhida, general secretary, and Joe Slovo.

In its message to the Congress the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union noted:

> "The forming of the WPE is a big victory of the working class and all working people of Ethiopia, a logical result of the consistent implementation of the ideals of the Ethiopian revolution . . . Soviet communists solidarise with the courageous struggle of Ethiopia's working people for national rebirth and social progress, for the creation of conditions for transition to the building of socialism".

The four Presidents of the Southern African states added their support to the historic event. President Kaunda commented that, apart from the racist regime of South Africa, the Selassie dynasty had been the most oppressive in Africa. President Nyerere noted: "The tasks undertaken in a decade to change Ethiopia's backward production relations have laid firm the basis for building socialism." President Machel spoke of the solidarity between Mozambique and Ethiopia and President Mugabe of the need to reinforce socialist unity between brother states.

S.A.C.P. MESSAGE

The following is the full text of the message delivered to the founding congress of the Ethiopian Workers' Party by Comrade Moses Mabhida, general secretary of the South African Communist Party:

"On behalf of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, I would like to bring the warmest fraternal greetings to you, the delegates who are assembled here, and through them, the whole Ethiopian people.

This Congress is indeed a uniquely important occasion not only for the Ethiopian people but also for the continent of Africa and the whole of progressive mankind — we are certain it all started in October, 1917, when the Russian workers smashed the autocracy in Russia and took over power.

For us, for the people of our country and the Party, we live to remember that your people were slaves only yesterday, and you fought your way out of slavery; we know well also that your revolution has powerful enemies both inside the country and outside; yet we are confident that as in the past you will triumph at the end.

We are witnesses today to an event in Africa — the first congress of a new Marxist-Leninist Party — which will go down in the history of the continent as a major achievement on the road to human progress. The coming into being of your Party is more than a declaration of faith in the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism; it is the harnessing of that science to serve your people and Africa. Added to these the creation of your Party reinforces the forces of peace in the world.

We have been taught that Marxism-Leninism is not a dogma but is an instrument in the hands of indigenous revolutionaries to be used creatively and to be moulded to the concrete realities which confront them at each stage of the struggle.

But we also know that there is one principle of Marxism-Leninism which is universal and which constitutes the very starting point for all revolutionaries; it is the principle that a vanguard of the working class is indispensable as the guide and leader of the revolutionary transformation. And now your long period of hard cultivation has indeed produced sweet-tasting fruit.

There is yet another reason to celebrate what is happening here. The colonisation of our continent involved, amongst other things, a cultural colonisation of the dominated peoples. Those who wielded this weapon did all in their power to make us believe that Africa was outside history and that we should not concern ourselves with Marxist class analysis which they dismissed as alien and foreign ideology. Your Congress is an assertion that Marxism-Leninism is as much part of the soil of Africa as marioca, cassava or mealies. And we must more and more proclaim this truth and demonstrate it through success in our revolutionary practice. It is therefore all the more important that the small but growing band of Marxist movements in Africa should work more closely together to spread a true understanding of socialist thinking.

Oldest Party

Comrades, our Party, founded in 1921 is the oldest Marxist-Leninist vanguard in the African continent. We represent a working class which suffers from a double yoke of exploitation as workers and as oppressed Africans. The most immediate task facing our working class and people is the complete destruction of the racist autocracy by means which include revolutionary violence.

Our Party constitutes one of the two important pillars of the liberation aliance headed by the ANC. Reaction is making every effort to break this alliance in order to destroy the revolutionary content of our liberation struggle. It is also doing all in its power to divide our liberation movement from the socialist world, and more especially from its most powerful bastion, the Soviet Union. We are confident that these attempts will be defeated.

With the encouragement and support of Reagan, South Africa has become imperialism's chief instrument in an attempt to recapture its lost positions in Southern Africa.

South Africa's strategy in pursuit of these aims can be divided into two stages: the first stage was the blatant policy of armed destabilisation and economic sabotage. In this stage direct attacks on all the neighbouring states was combined with the creation of, and support for, vast bandit armies such as UNITA, MNR, LLA, Muzorewa mercenaries and so on.

In the second stage, through which we are now passing, the regime is going all out to impose unequal security treaties on all its neighbours. Botha's purpose is clear. Pretoria hopes to gain economic and diplomatic footholds within these territories, and, above all, to bully and blackmail them in order to force them to abandon their international obligation towards the South African liberation struggle.

Fraternal Duty

We believe that it is the duty of the progressive mankind to provide the threatened states in Southern Africa with the means to enable them to resist the racist onslaught. We also believe that everything should be done, particularly by the OAU and the Front Line states, to ensure that the ANC-led liberation movement is given all necessary fraternal support. Let us remember, comrades, that the struggle for a truly free and independent Africa and the struggle to crush the racist tyranny in South Africa, are indivisible. And we, for our part, cannot leave them in peace to practise their barbarism.

Friends, our people's militancy and revolutionary determination has never been higher than it is today:

— despite terror and intimidation, the spirit which marked the period just before the Soweto uprisings of 1976 is once again in evidence;
— the Coloured and Indian people have rejected the new constitutional fraud and have proclaimed their solidarity with their fellow African brothers and sisters;
— the working class in our country has never been organised as it is today;
— in the countryside there are growing signs of resistance to the regime's bantustan policy;
— during the recent fraudulent elections the students in the schools and universities demonstrated their rejection of the regime's policies.

The emergence of the mighty United Democratic Front (UDF), bringing together as it does over 700 mass legal organisations with over 2½ million members, is another powerful challenge to the racist regime.

But above all the regime feels threatened as never before by the fact that the ANC and its allies are today accepted by our masses as the undisputed leaders of the whole liberation process in our country. This position has been won by the calibre of our movement's and military underground fighters. Our victory, comrades, is certain.

In conclusion, comrade President, let me emphasise once again that your Congress is a most exciting and important milestone in the struggle for national liberation, true independence and social emancipation in our continent. We wish you all success in your deliberations and we have every confidence that you will successfully meet the challenge which faces you.

LONG LIVE THE WORKERS' PARTY OF ETHIOPIA!
LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!
LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM!"

SENEGAL: Reinforcing the Ideological and Peace Fronts

The legalisation of the Independent and Labour Party of Senegal (ILP) has opened up possibilities and avenues for the Party to campaign openly on issues of vital importance to the people of Senegal. During the general election last year the Party put forward its own candidates and programme and the Senegalese people were able to listen to and discuss the Party's view on wide-ranging issues — Senegal's neo-colonial dependency on world capitalism and who benefits from it; how and why the NATO Alliance is using Senegal as a strategic point for its global strategy, especially as it relates to Africa; the problems of under-development and the need to restructure socio-economic relations internally and internationally.

More important, the Party was able to explain why the socialist path of development afforded the most attractive option for the Senegalese people to extricate themselves from the system of inequality, impoverishment, unemployment and social injustice and create a just, democratic and progressive social order. According to the ILP's post-election analysis the Party was able, as never before, to reach broad sections of the people and explain to them why the present alignment of class forces in Senegal was not in the interests of the people and why a radical rupture with the past had to be made. The Party was able to present itself and its programme as the real alternative to the Socialist Party of Abdou Diouf, Senghor's successor.

The elections, however, returned to power the old ruling circle under a new head of state. Senghor has departed from the foreground and Abdou Diouf, his nominee, has taken over. For the ILP the struggle for the socialist option continues. The election campaign provided only the opening salvo.

Two of the issues which the Party is concentrating its efforts on have a significance far beyond Senegal — the struggle for world peace and the need to intensify the ideological struggle. Both deserve the untiring effort of the Party.

How Africa looks on Peace

In Senegal, as in Africa, no mass movement for peace has emerged, because the dangers of a nuclear catastrophe and the growing threat posed to world peace by imperialism, especially the present policies of the Reagan Administration, are not properly understood by the mass of the people. It is almost as if Africa is unconcerned with this threat overhanging our planet, because we believe, or have been led to believe, that the problem is far removed from our continent, that it is a "European affair". False prophets, who sometimes do pronounce on this, one of the most critical issues facing all the peoples of the world, often give the impression that Africans, even if they were concerned with the threat of nuclear war, are helpless to do anything. Governments indebted to the USA and other capitalist countries refuse to inform their peoples that the dangers emanate from one source only — the imperialist militarist circles in the USA and NATO. The mass media in these countries remain muzzled. The peace efforts of the Soviet Union remain unannounced, unpublished, unpublicised. The mass of the people remain ignorant.

In Senegal, the peace issue is directly related to the country's independence. France, as a member of the NATO Alliance, has since independence 25 years ago, been allowed a military presence and base in Senegal. Both the USA and France used Senegalese facilities to intervene directly in the conflict in Chad on the side of reaction. Senegal was also allowed to be used by Britain in the Malvinas war against Argentina. All of these are instances of the important role and place of Senegal in NATO's military arrangements.

The ILP is the only organised political force in Senegal which has raised the struggle for world peace and the independent development of Senegal as inseparable issues which require the active involvement of a broad alliance of peace, progressive and democratic forces.

The ideological struggle in Senegal has become an important front for the Party for a number of reasons specific to Senegal.

After more than two decades of clandestine and semi-clandestine activity and campaigning the Party has finally succeeded in forcing its recognition as an integral and legal participant in the socio-political process in Senegal. This has necessitated that the Party and its cadres concentrate on placing its socialist alternative to the mass of the workers, peasant, youth, students, women and other social strata in clearly-understood terms, especially in a country where the written tradition is not universal and Marxist literature is available only in French. This has demanded a high degree of theoretical understanding and application from the Party cadres, literature and journals. In the new conditions of legality the Party also attracts to its ranks new members, who require to be schooled and trained in Marxism and its creative application to the specific circumstances in Senegal.

Under 'normal' conditions the need for ideological training and clarity and the constant replenishment of the Party's ranks by new recruits would have required a programme of training cadres to fulfil the role of vanguard fighters for socialism. In Senegal, a new urgency has been brought to this task. The legalisation of the ILP has meant that Marxism and the socialist outlook itself now enjoy a legality hitherto denied to them. The ruling circles cannot, and do not, minimise the influence and attraction of this world revolutionary outlook. Consequently, two trends have appeared simultaneously among opponents of socialism and the ILP.

The first relies on the African-exclusivist theory to deny Marxism's relevance to Africa. The second attempts to accommodate Marxism, but in a distorted and emasculated form. The first derives from the old, partly discredited line of Senghor's Negritude doctrine, the second from the so-called socialist line of Diouf's Socialist Party since its affiliation to the Socialist International. Since the study of Marxism has also been legalised within the senior grades of secondary schools and institutions of higher learning, the ruling circles within the Socialist Party are attempting to ensure that it is their version and those of other anti-Marxist Marxologists from within the Social Democratic and Socialist Parties of the Socialist International that prevail.

Non-Marxist Marxologists

The strategy of the ruling Socialist Party is therefore to spread confusion and to misrepresent the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, to discredit the achievements of the countries of existing socialism by using its Marxologists, who themselves have only a superficial understanding of Marxist principles, but nonetheless have studied them with the clear purpose of discrediting them. Within the framework of its relations with the Parties within the Socialist International the Socialist Party often invites leading Marxologists from one or other Party to lecture on Marxism. These are often widely publicised in the official press and radio and translated in the various vernaculars, apart from French. The invariable theme of these lectures is the old line of Social Democracy — that Marxism, on a reformed basis, can be applied to the problems of society to make capitalism work better by ameliorating the working, economic and social conditions of the workers. Invariably such distortions are accompanied by attacks on the socialist countries, the Communist parties and, in Senegal, the ILP.

The onslaught of social reformism is not the only difficulty faced by the Party in the theoretical-ideological sphere. Senegal is a predominantly Islamic country with almost 90 per cent of the people believers of that faith. Religion therefore is a socio-political force which the Party cannot ignore, especially when conservative forces attempt to use it as a weapon to divorce the mass of the people from the progressive movement. Their line is to conceal the actual political, economic and social issues by creating a division between so-called believers and non-believers, instead of what the Party sees as the real dividing line: that between the champions of national independence, social justice and progress and those who are bent on maintaining the system of class exploitation.

For these reasons the ILP has seen it as an urgent necessity to intensify the work of the Party in the ideological sphere, a task which confronts genuine revolutionaries throughout Africa.

THE MAGHREB: The Morocco-Libya Treaty

The Treaty of Oujda, signed between Libya and Morocco on August 13, 1984, sent political shock waves reverberating through the capitals of Africa and the other states of the Maghreb — Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania. Not surprisingly, the imperialist powers reacted swiftly to the announcement of the newly-formed Arab-African Federation, because of the enormous implications it has for their declared interests in the region. President Francois Mitterand of France and General Vernon Walters, President Reagan's special envoy, hurried to Rabat, the Moroccan capital, to assess the Treaty.

The region has always been regarded by the United States to be of crucial strategic importance, especially Morocco. NATO military circles have often declared their interest in the Maghreb as "NATO's southern flank" with Morocco as the lynchpin in their strategic calculations. Hence the large amounts of dollar aid to Morocco, the supply of sophisticated weapons to the regime to continue its colonial war against the POLISARIO in the Western Sahara, and the establishment of a number of American military bases inside the country. Libya on the other hand has always been regarded by the Reagan Administration as the main threat to American and NATO interests in the region and has been subjected to a sustained campaign of hostility, vilifiation and military provocations in an attempt to discredit and overthrow the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafy. The reasons for the French anxiety over the Treaty are also not difficult to understand. France and Libya have supported opposite sides in the Chad conflict. The French, it will be remembered, intervened with a massive military force in Chad when it became apparent that their placeman, Hissene Habre, was about to be toppled by the forces of the GUNT, earlier recognised by the OAU as the legitimate power in Chad, and overthrown by the CIA-backed counter-revolution led by Hissene Habre.

The questions uppermost in everybody's mind are: what are the consequences of the Treaty for the other Maghreb states, Chad and for the OAU?

From the Moroccan point of view, the Treaty could not have come at a better time. Hassan's regime has been extremely unpopular at home and increasingly isolated within the OAU. The corruption, nepotism, brutal political repressioon and feudal rule have been the source of popular discontent for a long time. The unpopular war against the POLISARIO has been another source of discontent, especially because the war has been seen to be unjust, an enormous drain on the country's ailing economy and a cause for divisions within the Maghreb. Within the armed forces, too, the war has come to be regarded as unwinnable and military unrest has been on the increase.

Except for the support Morocco enjoys among the most reactionary Arab and African states the Hassan regime stands effectively isolated within the OAU. The problem has been King Hassan's refusal to implement successive OAU resolutions calling for direct negotiations between Morocco and the political representatives of the POLISARIO who have proclaimed the Western Sahara as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The OAU resolution also calls for a national referendum of the people of the SADR to ascertain their wishes for independence or continued rule from Rabat. Such a referendum is feared by the Rabat clique because it would result in an overwhelming victory for the SADR and its armed wing, the POLISARIO Front, and an end to colonial rule. Since the last OAU Summit more states have come to recognise the right of the SADR representatives to take their rightful place in the OAU, a right conferred at the Nairobi Summit. These now include Mauritania, which itself contested the war against the POLISARIO earlier, and Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta). There have been indications that states such as the Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya are tiring of the inflexibility of Morocco and may recognise the SADR. Not only have the Moroccans refused to honour the pledge to the OAU, but they have gone to great lengths to take the Western Sahara issue outside of the OAU and into the Arab League where they hope to have the backing of the reactionary Arab states to maintain their colonial domination over the country.

The Saharan issue was used by Morocco to wreck the 19th Summit of the OAU due to be held in Tripoli with Colonel Gaddafy as chairman. Libya has been one of the most staunch supporters of the POLISARIO and the right of the SADR to enjoy full status within the OAU. The Treaty therefore strikes at the very heart of this support, given Moroccan intransigence.

The Other Maghreb

Although Colonel Gaddafy flew to Algiers to brief President Chadly Benjedid about the Treaty, no one, least of all Algeria, can doubt that the new Federation contains the seeds of further tension and possible instability in the region. At the heart of the problem is Moroccan colonialism and its close alliance with the United States and NATO. Not unexpectedly, soon after the Treaty was signed, the Politburo of the National Liberation Front of Algeria (FLN), the country's supreme political body, released a statement which confirmed this. The FLN maintained that Maghreb unity cannot be conceived of "without the people of the Western Sahara enjoying their national rights to the full". The statement went on to affirm that "the natural framework for solving the Western Sahara affair" was the OAU. Since the Treaty also contains a clause on mutual defence between Libya and Morocco, the other Maghreb states are rightfully concerned that the colonial regime of Rabat may invoke this clause to support its declared policy of hot pursuit against the POLISARIO into neighbouring territories, when its own forces may then be confronted by those of the host countries.

When these and other considerations are weighed up it is clear that the only beneficiary of the Treaty is Morocco and the imperialist powers, since there has been no indication that Hassan's regime will abandon its NATO backers, move toward decolonisation in the Western Sahara and pursue a policy of regional cooperation and peace.

The French withdrawal of troops from Chad, announced soon after President Mitterand's trip to Rabat and the subsequent meeting between the French foreign minister and Libya, is of course, to be welcomed. This accords with the demands by African countries, who correctly interpreted French military intervention as an attempt to bolster up the pro-western regime of Habre and thus increase the prolonged agony of the country and its people. Yet the conflict persists. Habre's regime is clearly not one capable of uniting the various forces into a government of national unity as the GUNT indeed succeeded in doing before Habre's CIA-backed counter-revolution. Whether France will honour the undertaking for complete military evacuation now and non-intervention in the future remains to be seen.

The ideal of Maghreb unity, which has foundered for so long on the rock of diversity and divisions between the various states in the political, social and ideological spheres, remains a distant dream. The FLN statement cited earlier goes to the heart of the matter:

> "The ideal of Maghreb Unity should serve no other cause but its own. It cannot be exploited for tactical purposes . . . Axis politics is not in fact unity politics. They work towards dividing what should be brought closer together."

The new situation in the Maghreb is clearly one that is potentially explosive for both Arab and African unity and can be exploited by the Hassan regime to create divisions and disunity which in the long run can be more costly than the ideals of a unity for which conditions have not yet matured. In this situation African patriots and governments need to act with principled vigour if an escalation of the already-existing tensions in the region is to be avoided.

WE MUST WIN OVER THE AFRICAN MIDDLE STRATA

By Mahlekehlathini

The South African Communist Party though working under conditions of illegality must ensure the development of strong ties with the masses. A party that is not grounded and rooted in the masses cannot accomplish a revolution and can never deserve the title of a vanguard party. It is important that every now and again the line of march must be defined to see which forces must be mobilised at every stage of the revolution and which must be isolated. Lenin clearly elucidates this when analysing the forces that are to carry the revolution:

> "One must know what real political forces profit by the tactical slogans advanced — or perhaps by the absence of certain slogans".(1)

The South African regime is in a crisis situation from which it attempts to extricate itself by promoting the black middle strata which will be its ally. The crisis has to be met with an attempt to restructure certain fundamental relationships between classes and the state. Who are the "black middle strata" and how does the enemy define them? Marxists define middle strata as:

> "social groups which occupy an intermediary position between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The middle strata of bourgeois society include one intermediary social class that is the petty-bourgeoisie, and a number of social groups: persons of the liberal professions; semi-proletarians who are simultaneously hired workers and owners of small enterprises; hired workers who do not own the means of production but differ in some respect from the working class e.g. representatives of the intelligentsia".(2)

Bourgeois sociologists in defining the middle class are not scientific and use a range of indicators e.g. salary, psychology, etc. Workers, petty-bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, peasants, etc. are lumped together. The South African regime is trying to develop a black middle class which includes workers with Section 10 rights, professionals, petty traders and petty bourgeoisie.

S.A. brand of capitalism

Capitalism objectively engenders classes characteristic to it. South Africa has attained a highly developed system of state monopoly capitalism which has got its own peculiarities of development.

The state not only interferes in economic affairs but also has been restricting the development of a black entrepreuneur class. Despite this a small number of black petty owners has been growing. Phineas Malinga commented in an article in *The African Communist:*

> "In spite of artificial obstacles placed in its way by apartheid, economic development has to take place in those areas which are economically most favourable for it, and economic development cannot by-pass the majority of the population."(3)

Traditionally the bourgeoisie developed from the petty-bourgeoisie. To become a capitalist in a country with a highly developed industry, it is necessary, other things being equal, to possess more capital than in a country with a low level of development of productive forces. Lenin wrote:

> "Every advance in science and technology inevitably and relentlessly undermines the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society".(4)

The number of bankruptcies in S.A. which have reached a record level are a vindication of this truth.

The development of capitalism is accompanied by the proletarianisation of other classes and strata. To interfere with these objective laws means that the racist regime has to pour out huge sums of capital to realise its aims.

The government poured millions of rands into its Bantustan programme to promote the middle strata and obtain its other strategic aims e.g. reservoirs of cheap labour, etc. The government collaborators are paid high salaries which they use to buy shares in a number of projects, collecting shops, bottle stores and hotels. Land bought from white farmers under the Homeland Consolidation Act is taken by high-ranking Bantustan officials. The Matanzima brothers own thousands of hectares of land both agriculture and ranching in the Transkei. These elements have set themselves the task of opposing the revolution. The high-handed rule of Sebe in the Ciskei, who wants to outshine his masters in brutality, is another glaring example.

Though they have been won over by the enemy, differences between them still exist. Being far from the main economic centres creates a lot of limitations in their personal enrichment; limitations in investing in high profit branches of the economy which are in the so-called white South Africa and competition from white capital inside the Bantustans since "power" is not totally in their hands. Matanzima stated that "two top-level South African advisers had more power in the Transkei than he had himself".(5)

Some leaders of the Bantustans have protested to the S.A. government against its constitutional reforms. Though some have opted for "independence" they still have eyes on "South Africa" where the economy is developed and prospects of prosperity exist.

Those who are refusing "independence" realise this pitfall. However both these groups have the same philosophy of making profits and money while time allows. Some even threaten to side with the ANC when money is not forthcoming from their masters. When the revolution has gained the upper hand some will join the revolutionary forces while others will remain faithful servants.

Our tactics towards these strata should take all these factors into account. Lenin's advice in dealing with liberals is applicable. He said:

> "The party of the proletariat must learn to catch every liberal just at the moment when he is prepared to move forward an inch, and make him move forward a yard. If he is obdurate, we will go forward without him and over him."(6)

Could we not have pushed the "alliance" of Bantustan leaders in opposition to the Botha constitutional reforms; Matanzima when protesting against the treatment of Transkei "citizens" in Mdantsane during the recent bus boycott, and many other examples? Boycott is a tactic and can never be an immutable principle. Adherence to the principles of flexibility is a prerequisite of a revolutionary party.

Urban Labour Force

Urban Africans have been a permanent headache for the government. It is the government's wish to have all Africans belong to one Bantustan or another, but industry needs a permanent resident labour force in the urban areas. The regime wants to make Section 10 holders part of the middle strata even though they are workers. To realise this the number of Africans in urban areas must be seriously reduced. The three Koornhof Bills and the unprecedented mass removals that are taking place are attempts at fulfilling this idea. The realisation of this is seen by such actions as the granting of the 99-year leaseholds, that education in urban areas should be shouldered by private capital, the training of black workers and removal of job discrimination. These workers are defined by the government as the middle strata that will not be easily influenced by revolutionary ideas.

However, the "black privileged workers" will still be confronted with the same problems that are confronting them now, whose solution is the overthrow of the apartheid rule.

Some members of the ruling class advocate the encouragement of the growth of an African petty-bourgeoisie, more especially those linked with foreign monopoly capital. They are at one with Minister of Defence Magnus Malan when he says "the problem is 20% military and 80% political". Despite government intentions to encourage the growth of these strata in the Bantustans, they are fast growing in the urban areas, involved in retail trade and services.

How much government effort is involved in promoting the growth of these strata is difficult to say because concentration of capital engenders these strata. The development and appearance of new branches has brought about a whole service 'industry' which small business is in a hurry to get into. The development of automobile, electronic, radio engineering industries, etc. has created a wealth of such enterprises as petrol stations, garages, radio repair shops, etc. These are low-profit spheres as far as big capital is concerned. Instead of setting up their small auxiliary enterprises, large companies often prefer to exploit small entrepreneurs who are formally independent but actually dependent upon them. The promoters of these strata are organisations founded by big capital — Urban Foundation, Small Business Development Corporation, whose head is Anton Rupert. NAFCOC is also financed by big business and monopolies.

This section of the petty bourgeoisie is fighting the government to open up more opportunities for them. Sam Motsuenyane, a true representative of this group, complains:

> "I cannot see how Blacks can develop a love for capitalism if they are not allowed to become capitalists themselves and share equitably in the wealth of their country".

This section should be mobilised for struggle and shown that communists advocate their interests and guarantee their small business as the Programme of the Party states:

> "The State should protect the interests of private business where these are not incompatible with the public interest. It should offer assistance, by way of state loans, to non-monopolist producers in return for a state share in their undertakings, thus paving the way for a gradual and peaceful transition to socialisn ".(7)

The Collaborators

The other section of the petty-bourgeoisie is that which for its development is dependent on collaboration with the government. Collaborators like Thebehali are a good example. This group, though faced with limitation, believe that the government will have some goodwill and allow them certain privileges and favours. Thebehali speaking in the Federal Republic of Germany says:

> "I am a partisan of dialogue and non-violence and committed anti-Marxist. It is necessary to prevent a seizure of power by negative revolutionary forces."

Like a parrot he is mimicking the words of his paymasters. Only the might of the revolutionary forces will neutralise or run over this section.

The other section of the middle strata is that which is surplus not in the absolute but in comparison with the average demands of capital in its self-growth.(8) Lenin emphasised that one such form of expression of relative over-population in capitalist society is often small traders and other small-scale producers.

During economic crises there is an influx of independent producers and traders. A report of the Temporary National Economic Committee of USA Congress states that during the 1929-1933 depression, the number of petrol stations increased from 98,976 to 156,538. This section lives like the proletariat, though some manage to better their lot. In South Africa it manifests itself in the growth of illegal shops, shebeens, pirate taxis, coal merchants, etc. The government is harassing and using brutal methods in closing down their small sources of livelihood. Their organisation into the main stream of revolution is urgent. The government's attempt to legalise shebeens is aimed at promoting the middle strata among those who are successful.

The professional classes and intelligentsia in our country have a history of struggle. In this group we count teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, etc. Their position is gradually worsening. For example the teachers' salaries are at the same level as the wages of workers and in some instances even lower. Their profession has lost all the prestige it formerly enjoyed. The hardships these people face in life under apartheid rule objectively draw them into the national liberation struggle e.g. discrimination in education and many other limitations. Doctor Motlana interviewed by a journalist, Anna Starke, said "I earn enough to move anywhere, but I am trapped".(9)

Many have involved themselves in the struggles of the people, sometimes leading them. Organisations such as Black Lawyers' Association are in the thick of struggle not for their rights as lawyers exclusively, but to inform the public about their rights as laid down in the South African statute books.

This section also needs to be mobilised and organised. Because of their position and standard of education, they have the capacity to carry these ideas to the masses. If properly organised they can play an important role in bringing political consciousness to the working class.

Since the middle strata are not a homogeneous group a differentiated approach to them is necessary. Slogans and demands that will draw them into serious struggle must be found. It is the duty of the Communist Party to concentrate all "drops and streamlets of popular resentment into a single gigantic torrent" against the racist regime.(10) To deal the enemy telling blows we must isolate secondary allies. Strong ties with all classes and strata of society are the only guarantee of victory.

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Sandinista leader Tomas Borge speaks about

THE EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION IN NICARAGUA

The only survivor of the founders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), a member of its National Leadership and minister of the interior, commander Tomas Borge now 52, is "the most feared and most loved Nicaraguan," as Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano put it. The people admire him, his enemies hate him. "Tomas, Tomas: not a single step backwards!" people shout at him, while the Central Intelligence Agency has planned several attempts to murder him and the US government has refused him a visa to visit the United States on three occasions.

Borge began his opposition activity to the regime of Anastasio Somoza Garcia, founder of the "bloody breed," at age 13. His early rebellion was perhaps due to the fact that his father had battled the US Marines in 1912 and was a friend of Augusto César Sandino. At the age of 16 he was editor of an anti-Somoza newspaper called *Espartaco* which was followed by Juventud *Revolucionaria* and *El Universitario.* Meanwhile in order to earn a living and payfor his studies, he was also a correspondent for the then anti-regime daily *La Prensa.*

When he was in his fifth year at law school, his friendship with Rigoberto López Pérez — who on September 21, 1956, killed the elder Somoza — led to arrest and an end to his university career. In 1959 he fled Nicaragua: he was 29 years old.

In July 1961 he was one of the three founding members of the FSLN. That was followed by 18 years of living underground except for when he was in jail in Honduras, Costa Rica and his own country. In August 1978 he was released for the last time in a spectacular operation. A year later on July 9, 1979, he entered Managua triumphantly, releasing prisoners and putting the jailers behind bars.

As minister of the interior he promised that the Sandinistas would be "implacable in combat and generous in victory." He was the first to set the example. One day he visited his former jailer and torturer who was then in prison and said: "My punishment will be to release you; my revenge, to see that your children go to school."

In February 1984, a representative of the journal *Cuadernos del Tercer Mundo* (Third World) was in Nicaragua at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the murder of the General of Free Men, Augusto C. Sandino, and obtained an exclusive interview which lasted an hour and a half. Although elections have taken place in both Nicaragua and the United States since then, the comments of Commander Borge remain relevant and throw a striking light on the situation in Central America.

The Fourth Frontier or the Immortality of Crabs

Nicaragua borders on Honduras, Costa Rica and El Salvador. It is logical to assume that relations, be they tense or cordial, would be directly with the governments of those countries. Why has the United States been a party to these relations since and even before the victory of the Revolution?

Because US arrogance ignores geography and claims that the Central American nations border on the United States. Thus they speak of the "fourth frontier" just as they might speak of the immortality of crabs or coloured butterflies. Unfortunately, some of the governments of the countries that border on Nicaragua believe in the theory of the fourth frontier — and perhaps in the immortality of crabs as well — and serve as instruments of the Reagan administration. The chief victims of this policy are the people of the United States. Nicaragua is attacked militarily; and the people of the United States are attacked in ideological and disinformation terms. In order to promote solidarity with the people of the United States, we have established broad relations with different political, trade union, student and religious sectors there who, on visiting Nicaragua and touring the territory, seeing proof of the armed attacks and talking to people, acquire an exact view of the real situation. When they return to the United States they carry a message that multiplies, two-way solidarity: on the one hand they contribute, no matter how slightly, to preventing the US government from doing what it likes with impunity; and on the other, we express our fraternal solidarity with the people of the United States.

General Hunger, Commander in Chief in Central America

The position of the democratic governments that support Nicaragua is that Central America is not, or at least should not be, the site of the East-West confrontation. But repetition has unfortunately made this assertion a commonplace. Can you tell me why it is that Central America does not fall within the East-West confrontation?

It's very simple: it's almost — almost — a matter of statistics. While the per capita income of the people of the United States is 10,000 dollars a year, that of Latin Americans is 1500. And Central Americans are even worse off since our per capita income is less than 500 dollars a year. What's more, Central American life expectancy at birth is 50 years: 23 less than the people of the United States. Another statistic: in some parts of Central America 200 of every 1000 children die, while in the United States the figure is 13 of every 1000. Central America has suffered various dictatorships and a verse of "Apocalypse" could have been written about each. The last tyranny in Nicaragua lasted nearly half a century, and it is estimated that the National Guard killed 300,000 people. In Guatemala, more than 100,000 people have been killed since 1954. Since 1979 el Salvador has paid the same price as we did in the last stage of the battle against Anastasio Somoza: nearly 50,000 lives. Hunger is the problem here, and hunger is not an East-West or big power issue, it is a conflict between dictatorships and the people. "General Hunger" is the only commander in chief in Central America. But this is not just a question of the stomach: there is also hunger for justice.

In addition to the East-West confrontation, another subject the government of the United States and some of its Central American allies raise a lot is the influence of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Nicaragua. What interference is there?

All peoples of the world, especially revolutionary peoples, who are quite fraternal, influence each other. But contrary to what many claim, I have heard Cubans talk about the influence of the Nicaraguan Revolution on their country. I think Commander Fidel Castro himself has mentioned this influence. I won't deny that the Cuban Revolution has exerted a certain, very positive influence: we learned from their mistakes so as not to repeat them. The Cuban experience in the field of agrarian reform and economic policy was very important in terms of successes and errors. The influence of the USSR is rather more remote, but we take their experience into account as we do that of other countries. This doesn't mean that the Nicaraguan Revolution doesn't have its own features, its own personality and identity.

But aren't you unduly dependent on the socialist countries bloc in terms of trade?

That's another fairy tale peddled by the United States. There is no dependency. There are facts and figures available from international economic agencies. We have more trade with the capitalists than with the socialists.

Give me some data, some figures.

In the economic field, our relations with non-socialist countries are four times greater than those with socialist countries. In 1982, for example, only 8.8 percent of our trade was with socialist countries. Our trade with Western Europe or the United States — in spite of the restrictions the latter has imposed on us — is more than double that with all the socialist countries put together. Claims of Soviet and Cuban interference in Nicaragua are based on total ignorance of Nicaraguan feelings and national pride; the contrary would mean acknowledging that we don't have minds of our own, that we don't respect the blood of our martyrs, that we are mere puppets. Many US friends of Nicaragua have witnessed and admired our national pride. If you find a Soviet citizen here, he is sure to be a first-rate technician. If you find a Cuban, he's a doctor or a teacher of the kind who are not afraid of going into the jungle to see 100 patients a day or give 16 hours of classes nonstop. Those who speak of Soviet and Cuban interference think we have forgotten that during the Somoza regime, and long before, the US ambassador was the maximum authority here. That certainly was interference, which will not occur again.

We export Coffee, Cotton and Poetry

A moment ago you said that, contrary to what has been claimed, the

Nicaraguan Revolution had influenced Cuba. Does the Sandinista government plan to "export" its Revolution to Central America?

The only thing we export, and do so on a large scale, is coffee, cotton and poetry. Revolutions are born of the particular conditions of each country, as even elementary schoolchildren in Nicaragua know.

Another charge by the Reagan administration and the opposition is that Sandinistas are "totalitarian".

The opposition here says and writes what it wants. They try to goad us into losing our patience but we won't fall into the trap. There are many things which we must rebuild and accomplish; we can't waste time or be diverted. Since they cannot think of anything better, they charge us with being totalitarian because there is supposedly no freedom of the press in Nicaragua. There are nine newspapers here, three dailies and six weeklies. Of the dailies one is the organ of the FSLN: *Barricada.* The other two, *Nuevo Diario* and *La Prensa,* are private. Furthermore, there are 46 radio stations, of which 25, or 53 percent, are private. On these stations and in *La Prensa* the opponents of the government and the FSLN broadcast and publish their views. We don't censor them, we debate and refute them. Do you know many governments that do that? There is censorship, it's true, but on matters that must be censored when a state is at war, as the United States did in World War II, to cite just one example.

What kind of revolution is this in which there is a Ramiro Sacasa Democratic Coordinator that groups together all the opposition forces, a daily *La Prensa* and 25 radio stations that say whatever they wish and a Private Enterprise Higher Council (COSEP) that groups together the businessmen?

It's very simple: when only the voice of one political force is heard it tends to fall prey to arrogance. The existence of these remnants of the past are explained by the very strength of the Sandinista people's Revolution. Our Revolution developed a style of ideological confrontation and political debate that prevents everyday life from becoming boring. The existence of critics, opponents, dissidents, nonconformists and reactionaries gives life and vigour to the Revolution. Confrontation and debate are going to keep the people's political-ideological muscles in shape. It's a permanent gymnasium that doesn't allow for any atrophy and passivity.

We are generous because we are strong

Why is it that no one here was executed, kidnapped or made to disappear? This is a question, not a criticism.

Because we are strong. We once said: "Implacable in combat, generous in victory." We granted amnesty, we will hold elections and we are generous because we are strong. We taught the former National Guardsmen that we took prisoner after the triumph how to read and write; we trained them for jobs; and we provide them with a system of relative freedom in open country places, without police, bars or barbed wire fences. We allowed them to be with their wives. We sent their children to school. Diverse international observers verified these facts at the time. When one is strong, there's no room for hate. We've had many witnesses: the International Red Cross, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, US lawyers and internationally known writers such as Julio Cortázar, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Carlos Fuentes and Graham Greene, among others.

And why is Sandinismo strong?

Because the emphasis is on democracy and justice; because now there is respect for human dignity; because now we have national honour. But, primarily, do you know why we are strong? Because in Nicaragua the people have the weapons. Here there are no military personnel; there are armed citizens. We don't have planes, missiles, tanks, and we don't have enough guns so that every Nicaraguan can carry a weapon. Our problem is not a lack of people willing to fight, but rather a lack of weapons. We're sure that the problem of other Central American countries — which have planes, tanks and rifles made in the USA — is just the opposite: they have the weapons but not the men willing to take them up.

We trust in the will of the Nicaraguans

For a year now the governments of Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela, organized into the Contadora Group, have been making political and diplomatic efforts to bring about peace in Central America. The task is a slow and difficult one. Does the Sandinista government have faith in the Group's actions?

The Contadora Group has positively contributed to avoiding direct U.S. military intervention in Central America. Its existence provides the chance for negotiation among the parties in conflict and has served as a retaining wall against invasion. It would have been very easy for the Ronald Reagan government to send Marines to the region if it weren't for the political and diplomatic efforts of this Group.

Nevertheless, the repeated joint military manoeuvres that the United States conducts in Honduras and the Caribbean, and the invasion of Grenada as well, are events that worry the Nicaraguans...

The Contadora Group serves as a route leading to the organization of serious negotiations. However, we don't harbour illusions. When push comes to shove, we trust in the will of the Nicaraguans that will be the trench from which we'll defend our country. We know that we won't have help from anybody, no direct participation of any country, except the morale booster of fraternal solidarity from all the peoples.

U.S. Citizens will Regret Danger

What do you think President Ronald Reagan's chances are of being reelected?

He maintains an aggressive policy toward Nicaragua, which he says represents a danger to the neighbouring countries and even to the United States itself. I'll refer to concrete data. Nicaragua is about 80 times smaller than the United States in size and population. The total cost of the U.S. B-1 strategic bombers, to give just one example, is 62 times greater than the annual budget of our country. Nicaraguan armament and corresponding policy has a strictly defensive character. For us, then, the U.S. presidential candidate is not Mr. Ronald Reagan, but rather war. What the U.S. citizens are going to elect is danger. The covert and the not so covert actions against Nicaragua are costing the U.S. taxpayers millions of dollars; tomorrow they could cost them thousands of human lives. The only war that the Sandinistas wanted to fight is the war against underdevelopment.

In their elections, the U.S. citizens will reelect danger. And you Nicaraguans, in your elections, what will you elect? On February 21, the National Leadership of the Sandinista Front announced the date of the upcoming elections in Nicaragua. Did this respond to external pressures, to suggestions from the Contadora Group, to demands from the opposition or all of these?

Our Revolution made for a qualitative change in the people's awareness. Our people are not going to elect men; they are going to elect programs. Caudillismo has disappeared from this country. There's no longer a place for flamboyant figures or hack politicians who rehearse their smile before a mirror to later sell it to the people like merchandise. It is the program of the Revolution that is going to determine the fate of Nicaragua. The electoral process will begin in 1984 to culminate in 1985, as was promised in 1980, a few months after the Sandinista triumph. This has been accomplished in scarcely five years. Let's draw a comparison: in the United States the first elections were held in 1789, 13 years after the declaration of its independence.

What is the relationship between the state and the Church at present?

I'll read you the text of a speech that I was going to give in the United States but never did because the government of that country refused to grant me a visa. "The Nicaraguan people are revolutionary and Christian. Many priests, pastors and religious workers fully participate in the process... There is a very large number of Christians who work side by side with members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. There were Christians who gave their lives for our Revolution. Some priests, such as Father Gaspar Garcia Laviana, even died in combat. Several Catholic priests are state ministers; others are diplomats. The spiritual leader of Nicaraguan young people is Jesuit priest Fernando Cardenal." The problem does not lie with the Christian people, but rather with the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This hierarchy has contradictions with us and with the people. We will try to resolve the Church's contradictions with the revolutionary institutions but we cannot — and neither is it our role — resolve their contradictions with the poor people.

Five Years of Revolution

The Sandinista Revolution celebrates its fifth anniversary on July 19th of this year. During this time have mistakes been made?

Yes, perhaps too many.

What kind of mistakes?

One big mistake, in my opinion, was to have subsidized normality. In other words, after such a violent struggle, one that cost so much in terms of human lives and material resources, I think that we should have begun a war economy. The donations, credit lines and other forms of international cooperation — together with our country's scarce resources — went to subsidize this normality. For example, we renegotiated our foreign debt, among other things. All this, in my opinion, has had serious economic consequences, and our economic situation is the most tenuous aspect of our Revolution.

And what mistakes were made in the political sphere?

Perhaps not to have organized elections during the first two years. It would have made everything easier and it would have guaranteed the institutionalization of the Revolution from the beginning.

Individuals such as Edén Pastora and Alfonso Robelo, who are now dissidents, are they not products of the revolutionary process that occurred in Nicaragua?

Possibly. Every revolution that stirs up previously tranquil waters throws algae and also excrement on to the shores. And the Revolution does just that; it divides the waters and purifies them. It separates out the fecal matter and hurls it to a past that will never return. These two individuals are representatives of that past.

Poetry, an accomplice of the Revolution

A while ago, you said that the only things Nicaragua exports are coffee, cotton and poetry. All the Nicaraguans I know are poets, including some of the commanders. Can you explain this to me?

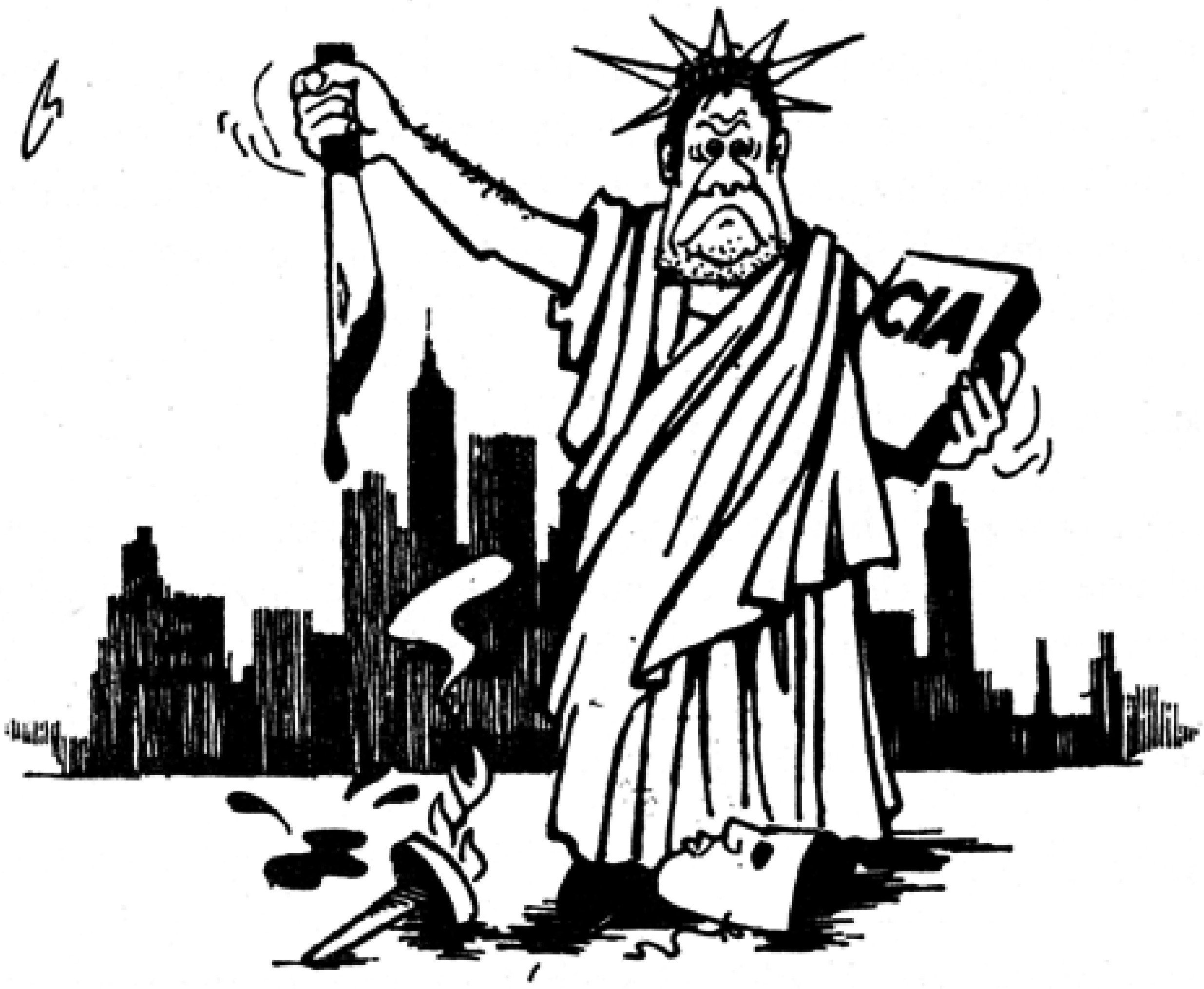
No, not all Nicaraguans are poets...

Okay, let's say 90 percent.

When I was in prison I would talk with the guards sometimes. They would read Ernesto Cardenal and say: "This is not poetry." Do you know why? Because Ernesto's poetry doesn't rhyme. In the daily *Novedades,* which belonged to the Somocista dictatorship, poems were published praising the tyranny: canción (song) rhymed with corazón (heart) and Somoza with cosa (thing). To them, that was poetry. Now, however, the Nicaraguan people —

who have had very important poetic roots — have multiplied their original imagination. Perhaps this is due to our Andalusian origin, or perhaps this country's vegetation and lakes merge with the people's psychology. Poetry was an accomplice of the Revolution here.

(Taken from *Cuadernos del Tercer Mundo* magazine, as reproduced in *Granma.* In the United States elections on November 6, President Reagan was returned to office winning 59 per cent of the votes cast in a 56 per cent poll. In the Nicaraguan elections on November 4, the Sandinista National Liberation Front won 67 per cent of the votes in an 82 per cent poll.)



BOOK REVIEWS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERATION

The Gramscian Challenge — Coercion and Consent in Marxist Political Theory, by John Hoffman. (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1984.)

The challenge Antonio Gramsci posed to Italian fascism by his extraordinary intelligence, militancy and, finally, by his martyrdom has only been rivalled by the posthumous challenge his political thought offers to Marxist theory. His accounts of the dynamics of 'hegemony' and his doctrine of the relative autonomy of the capitalist state have had a seminal influence on a startlingly wide spectrum of writers, from Poulantzas and Althusser to Eurocommunists like Lucien Sève. Nor has the Gramscian influence been limited to Europe. In South Africa, too, the ongoing debate — sometimes clandestine, sometimes surfacing into more public forums — concerning the nature of the apartheid state and the roots of racist repression, has been fuelled by variants of his ideas, filtered through diverse channels.

That this should be so is unsurprising. Questions about the nature of socio-political coercion and consent belong on the South African agenda if they belong anywhere, which is why John Hoffman's latest book deserves close critical attention from Marxist-Leninists concerned with the national liberation struggle on the African sub-continent.

Reviewing Dr. Hoffman's previous book, in issue No. 95, 1983 of this journal, I remarked that, in trying to cover too broad a range of complex issues, he had robbed the arguments of his *Marxism, Revolution and Democracy* of the necessary conceptual bite. He has remedied that defect in his latest work, sharpening his focus, identifying key concepts and then deploying them in a carefully woven critique which is the more persuasive in that it respects the stature of Gramsci's enterprise even as it probes the weaknesses of his positions. Hoffman goes on to use the insights his criticism of Gramsci affords to explore more concrete issues such as Eurocommunism, the Chilean coup, ways of analysing 'Stalinism' and the problems of liberalism, socialism and democracy.

Briefly (and, no doubt, crudely) stated, Gramsci's theoretical perspective is as follows: he resisted what he saw as a vulgar, mechanical and economistic interpretation of Marx's base-superstructure model of the structure of historical necessity, stressing instead the relative independence the state apparatus and political life enjoyed in relation to the productive forces and relations of production which ultimately determined them. Accordingly, he stressed also the Leninist doctrine that the proletariat has a leading role to play in the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

A General Feature

What has been thought by some commentators to be especially innovative in Gramsci's use of this doctrine is that he extended the concept of hegemony to include the bourgeoisie, so that hegemony was seen as a general feature of all class rule, and that he injected into the notion a special emphasis on morals, culture and intellectual life. The importance of this account emerges in the Gramscian distinction between the "war of manoeuvre" with its sudden attacks and seizures of power by the proletariat, and the slow, attritional "war of positions", which Gramsci held was increasingly becoming the European proletariat's sole alternative and which required that hegemony be massively concentrated in its hands.

Hoffman's way with this position is to elaborate a dialectical treatment of the notions of 'coercion' and 'consent', showing their mutual interaction and interdependence, and then to test Gramsci's views and those of his inheritors against the criterial picture which his dialectical treatment of these concepts yields. Having stated the problem of the so-called "crisis of Marxism", Hoffman begins at what seems to me to be the right place. He looks at the classical Marxist texts and examines how the coercion-consent problematic arises there. His treatment of these texts is extremely perceptive, enabling him to conclude that even in the early texts

> "... the young Marx does not merely have an ethical view of the state ... alongside this view, there stands a coercive, instrumentalist conception of politics." (p.23)

Because he avoids the crudely Althusserian view that a "rupture" irreparably sunders the thought of the young from that of the mature Marx, Hoffman is able to see that the ethical, neo-Hegelian and universalistic tendencies of his youth were not so much rejected as absorbed and transcended by the Marx of *Capital*, so that they invest the view he ultimately took of the state. "Coercion and consent", Hoffman argues, "are both intrinsic to Marx's view of politics which, in all its forms, is constituted by a synthesis of the two." (p. 40)

This, in my view, is one of the book's most important theses, for it implies a conclusion Hoffman is quick to draw — that the "rediscovery" of Gramsci "serves to demonstrate the importance and not the neglect of consent in classical Marxism." (p. 59) But if a true thinker's thought is rediscovered, then that rediscovery must, at the moment it truly happens, be a work of criticism. Hoffman takes full account of the powerful influence exerted on Gramsci by the great Italian idealist, Benedetto Croce, and judges that this influence was never entirely transcended. This leads to the further judgement that, despite the potential for political advance Gramsci's attempt to tackle the coercion-consent problematic represents, it fails because "where the classics present synthesis without analysis, Gramsci offers analysis without synthesis." (p. 75)

The reasons for this tragic and extremely notable failure can only be said to reside in Gramsci's "total political experience", if that phrase is meant to include his experience as the deeply reflective being he was, his experience as a philosopher. That idea will seem shocking only to those academics who fail to recognise in the philosophy they write and teach a form of political intervention. To Hoffman the Marxist it is not at all shocking, and he devotes a full and thoughtful chapter to exploring the philosophical underpinnings of Gramsci's theories, finding there an unclarity about the unity and difference between politics and economics, a tendency in Gramsci's philosophical writings to "identify *vulgar* materialism with materialism *tout court.*" (p. 105, Hoffman's emphasis). He finds too, what should not seem odd, that Gramsci's conception of nature is itself mechanistic, so that an abstract naturalism permeates his analysis of society's economic structure.

Relevance to S.A.

What, it may be asked, is the relevance of all this to the fight for national liberation in South Africa? The answer is simple and obvious. But like all 'obvious' things, it needs to be stated: the national liberation movement in general, and the South African Communist Party in particular, find themselves at a junction of events which pose questions that centre precisely around the concepts of 'coercion' and 'consent' and the interaction between the notions of 'wars of manoeuvre' and 'wars of position'. In the aftermath of Nkomati, Botha's new constitution, the victories gained on the fronts of armed struggle and popular mass resistance to apartheid, those who would lead a national democratic revolution need carefully to assess the balance of forces. This assessment implies a deepening of that theory without which there can be no revolution, and that deepening cannot happen without a sharpening of our understanding of even our most abstract concepts. Dr. Hoffman has contributed valuably to this activity.

H.T.

PIONEER PROPAGANDIST OF THE ANC

Sol Plaatje — South African Nationalist 1876-1932, by Brian Willan (Heinemann, London, 1984. Price £8.95)

The name of Solomon Tshehisho Plaatje is almost legendary in our movement and this is a reflection of the high esteem in which he is held. What has been perhaps lacking is detailed knowledge of what he did, how he thought and how he went about realising his dreams and aspirations. This book by Brian Willan — the first full-length biography of Sol Plaatje — fills this gap.

In 1894, as a messenger or letter carrier with the Post Office in Kimberley, he joined "a considerable number of educated Natives" who, because of the cosmopolitan nature of the diamond digging town, widened Plaatje's horizons. Plaatje went to school up to Standard 4. It was in Kimberley that he improved his English and Dutch and learnt Sesotho and Xhosa (and later Zulu) besides Tswana, his mother tongue, Koranna and German which he had learnt in the Organge Free State where he was born on October 9, 1876, on a farm, Doornfontein, an out-station of the Berlin Mission Society's main mission at Pniel. Kimberley also whetted his appetite for Shakespeare.

Equipped with so many languages, it is no wonder that he opted for a more promising job as a Clerk and court interpreter at the Mafeking magistrate's court. During the South African War Plaatje found himself in an unenviable position when Mafeking was surrounded by a force of several thousand Boers under the command of General Piet Cronje — a siege which lasted from October 11, 1899, until May 17, 1900. Plaatje's diary of the siege was published in 1973, more than 70 years after it was written.

Plaatje was the founder and editor of various Tswana/English newspapers. He also wrote innumerable articles in many South African newspapers:

> "Amongst both black and white in South Africa, Plaatje had become perhaps the most widely-read black journalist of his day." (p. 169).

It is well-known that Plaatje was involved in the formation of the ANC. What has not been properly appreciated is the extent to which he was involved and this comes out clearly in this book. He was active in this sphere from 1903 right through to 1911 "before Pixley Seme, a lawyer trained at Columbia University, USA, and Jesus College, Oxford, who had recently returned to South Africa, was able to issue his now famous clarion call for unity at the end of 1911." (p. 151).

The story about the two trips Plaatje made abroad as part of the 1914 and 1919 ANC delegations is full of lessons for our international work today. All this and much more is related vividly and meticulously in Brian Willan's book.

In this review I want to deal mainly with Plaatje's attitude to the African vorking class. This is not because this was Plaatje's weakest point, but ecause it demonstrates a certain trend in our movement; a trend that was redominant in those days. It is true that this trend is no longer significant, out to wish it away altogether would be presumptuous, to say the least.

The Problem of Class

When the ANC was formed in 1912, 'tribal' differences and animosities were regarded as the main problem, but six years later a new problem emerged: class differences.

Plaatje himself is a typical example of this process. Apologising to the De Beers Company for not replying to their letter on time because he had to attend a meeting of the Executive of the ANC on August 2, 1918, Plaatje writes:

> "I had to attend the Native Congress at Bloemfontein to prevent the spread among our people of the Johannesburg Socialist propaganda. I think you are aware of our difficulties in that connection since Mr Pickering, writing to me on an entirely different matter, ended his letter thus: 'For God's sake keep them (natives) off the labour agitators.' The ten Transvaal delegates came to Congress with a concord and determination that was perfectly astounding and foreign to our customary native demeanour at conferences. They spoke almost in unison, in short sentences nearly every one of which began and ended with the word 'strike'. It was not difficult to understand the source of their backing, for they even preceded the Congress and endeavoured to poison the minds of delegates from other parts. It was only late on the second day that we succeeded in satisfying the delegates to report, on getting to their homes, that the Socialists' method of pitting up black and white will land our people in serious disaster, while the worst that could happen to the white men would be but a temporary inconvenience. When they took the train for Johannesburg, from Bloemfontein station, I am told that one of them remarked that they would have 'converted Congress had not De Beers given Plaatje a Hall.' This seems intensely reassuring as indicating that Kimberley will be about the last place that these black Bolsheviks of Johannesburg will pay attention to, thus leaving us free to combat their activities in other parts of the Union." (p. 224).

This letter of Plaatje is important in many respects for, besides revealing his dependence on De Beers — he felt it necessary to report to them about an ANC Executive meeting — it also shows Plaatje's hatred of strikes or any radical form of action, and also his commitment to 'good relations' between black and white. This is to say nothing about his openly anti-socialist, anti-working class stance which he saw as a common platform with De Beers or as a basis for 'good relations' with them. His carefully selected suggestive words: "concord and determination that was perfectly astounding and *foreign*;" "it was not difficult to understand the *source* of their backing;" "endeavoured to *poison* the mnds of delegates from other parts" reveal more about Plaatje than about the people he is referring to.

What *is* astounding about all this is that whilst Plaatje is complaining about "black Bolsheviks from Johannesburg" in 1918, Brian Willan in his book tells us nothing about them and makes no mention of the impact and influence — direct or indirect — of the Russian October Revolution on South Africa.

Ten years later Plaatje came back to this theme of his "preoccupation" with "outside meddlers" (to use his words) in a letter — again written to the Secretary of De Beers:

> ". . . besides our regular work we have had our hands full combating and trying to keep the Communist movement outside Kimberley; this has been a stupendous task since Mr Bunting came here last September and left his agents here to spread his communistic propaganda" (p. 328).

One can understand — though not agree with — Plaatje's views of 1928, but what is difficult to understand is Brian Willan's endorsement of these views in 1984:

> "Sidney Bunting, chairman of the Communist Party of South Africa was certainly a nuisance but he had not a great deal of success in Kimberley, and the government was in any case armed with the *necessary* legislative powers to deal *effectively* with such people." (My emphasis). (p. 328).

The fact that the Communist Party exists today, even inside South Africa's jails, and that its contribution to the struggle has been acknowledged and appreciated by the ANC with which it is in alliance, disproves the assertion that "the government was in any case armed with the *necessary* legislative powers to deal *effectively* with such people."

Also the remark that the *South African Worker,* the Communist Party's newspaper, denounced Plaatje and his colleagues in 1922 (p.323) needs to be qualified and explained, because the same paper (then called *The International)* praised Plaatje in 1917. When the *Rand Daily Mail* bellowed that Plaatje made "a vicious attack on the Government and practically sounded the tocsin of a black v. white propaganda" *The International* saw things differently:

> "It is gratifying to see a native leader standing up fearlessly without mincing words. It is a sign of awakening in the native workers generally . . ." (*The International,* June 8, 1917).

We make these remarks not to denigrate Plaatje, but to show that he — and he was not the only one — was a man full of contradictions. This could not be otherwise because he lived at a crucial period in the history of our country when different, varying and contradictory trends and developments were taking place. All these factors — contradictory as they were — had an influence on Plaatje's life and thinking.

The problem with Plaatje is that he placed so much trust in the liberalism of the Cape, where Africans had the vote: hence his love for Victorian values and the belief in British "fair play." He hated the Boers, partly because of the 1913 Land Act which he described, exposed and condemned so thoroughly in his classic *Native Life in South Africa.* Plaatje was an anti-colonialist, although he did not understand or see the connection between colonialism and capitalism.

Plaatje was perpetually in financial difficulties and this led to his inability to do things he wanted to do: he could not publish his manuscripts, some of which got lost without trace. Even his *Diary of the Anglo-Boer War* was published 70 years after it was written — 41 years after his death — being discovered by Comaroff when he was doing anthropological research on the

Tswana. His impecuniosity led to his financial and hence political dependence on the "friends of the Natives" and logically to a wrong and at times unprincipled choice of "friends". His frustrations led to his pessimism — in his last years he was going up and down the country showing bioscope films to lepers and he was also involved in the activities of the International Order of True Templars. He had thus become what Brian Willan correctly calls "a leader without a people."

But Plaatje's greatness lies in the fact that he was a great fighter for the rights of his people; a fighter for the defence and development of African culture and languages, especially Tswana; a man who translated — for the first time — Shakespeare's works into Setswana (up to then nobody had translated Shakespeare into any African language); Plaatje fought for a new Tswana orthography; he was a linguist; editor and journalist; novelist and musician, court interpreter and translator of Tswana idioms and proverbs into English; and, above all, the first Secretary-General of the ANC and an international campaigner for the rights of the Africans.

This is Sol Plaatje the intellectual all-rounder and African leader who is revered and loved by millions of black people in our country — despite his inconsistencies.

Brian Willan has done an excellent job in this research. Some chapters are a pleasure to read, if for no other reason than the novelty of the material and information which, judging by the footnotes alone, must have cost a lot in terms of time, patience, perseverance and travel. The style is simple, flowing and coherent. This book resurrects Plaatje and reveals him as the man he was.

At a time when the racists are marching forward with their Bantustan and resettlement programme, uprooting more than 3 million people, Plaatje's ideas are more relevant today than before. For that reason alone reading this book is a 'must'.

Nyawuza

REPRINT OF A CLASSIC

South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt, by Govan Mbeki. (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1984. Price £3.)

The International Defence and Aid Fund has embarked on a programme of reprinting classics recording aspects of the South African struggle for national liberation which are now long out of print. Their first essay in this field was *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* by Jack and Ray Simons. Now they have published Govan Mbeki's major and pioneer study of the development of the Transkei Bantustan and the resistance of the Transkeian people to Verwoerd's vicious policies of 'separate development'.

Mbeki was born in the Transkei in 1910 and was educated at Transkei schools and the University of Fort Hare, where he was a contemporary of a number of leading members of the ANC Youth League as well as Kaiser Matanzima, then pretending ANC sympathies but later revealing himself as a collaborator with the apartheid regime. After graduating from Fort Hare, Mbeki taught in a number of schools but was sacked from the education department because of his political activities. He immersed himself in Transkei politics, becoming in turn Secretary of the African Voters' Association, general secretary of the Transkeian Organised Bodies and later a member of the Transkei Bunga. Inevitably he became deeply involved in the liberation struggle headed by the ANC.

Side by side with his politics went his involvement in and love for journalism, and he published a number of articles and books exposing the plight of the peasantry and putting forward the demands of the Transkei people. Later, when he moved to Port Elizabeth and built the ANC into one of the main bastions of resistance to the apartheid regime, he was also correspondent and Port Elizabeth manager of the people's newspaper *New Age*. He went underground to serve on the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe and it is because of his work in that capacity that he is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment for 'sabotage'.

The Peasants' Revolt shows what 'separate development' and Bantustans mean for the Transkei peasantry. It is written by a man who deeply loves and understands his people and has a sharp pen to describe their sufferings hopes and longings. It is simple and direct, very moving and above all optimistic because it reflects the author's confidence in the people's struggle for liberation. He was in the middle of it all, and he tells what he knows with graphic realism. Those who have not yet read *The Peasants' Revolt* should not miss this opportunity to obtain and study a people's classic.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THERE MUST BE A PLACE FOR MICHAEL K

From Miss Czeslawa Misztal, Gdansk, Poland.

Dear Editor,

I have read your magazine for some time for two reasons. Firstly I am interested in the world in general; secondly, I particularly hate fascism. The South African regime is the most horrid abcess on the body of mankind.

I am sorry to say I do not like your magazine very much. The articles are often very dry and boring, theoretical, whilst such a painful fight of people for their human dignity and national independence needs a paper which could appeal to the feelings of the people of the whole world.

I always wanted to write to you about this, but thought maybe I did not understand you and should wait a little with my opinion. However the article "Much Ado About Nobody" in your issue No. 97 (review of J.M. Coetzee's novel *Life and Times of Michael K.* — ed.) overstepped the bounds of my restraint. I was very embarrassed to find such an article in your magazine. I am all for communism, although I am not a member of the party. The individual does not become a communist by membership of the party. One needs to be born or at least brought up as a communist.

Communism is a social system based on enlightened, wise humanity. Well, is it human to say of a horribly unhappy human being that he is "nobody" "an amoeba", "almost inhuman"? It is very simple to treat someone who is not "sufficiently" like me as "not fully" human, "animal". Some white people call negroes "monkeys" because they regard them as different from themselves.

In your issue No. 96, page 110, you quote Govan Mbeki as saying: "Human beings are not cattle, sheep or pigs and that is a lesson all oppressors throughout history have failed to learn". Nor are they amoebas or monkeys. Communists must not divide society into "normal" human beings and "abnormal" ones, "wise" and "stupid" ones, "strong" and "weak" ones. All human beings are human beings. Isn't it simple?

I understand that you are filled with fight, but I am ashamed of communists writing: "Because the reader cannot identify with him (Michael K — ed.) either as hero or anti-hero, one feels neither pity nor terror at his fate, only indifference". Does this mean that if a human being is not your ally or enemy, if you do not understand his soul, his fate is indifferent to you? Can you not "feel for him", and if able to, help him? Can you let him die as an "amoeba" or "a mole or earthworm" because to you it is "nobody" who is dying? Some Poles say: "What are unknown hungry negroes or Hindus to me?" Is that correct?

The book *Michael K* won a prize because with "undoubted writing skill" the author calls people's attention to the fate of those who are unhappiest because they are weak, unintelligent, shiftless and they cannot force their way through the herd of individuals competing, shattering and destroying each other in the human "jungle" — the very word "jungle" expresses the animal-like struggle for life. Such weak people would like to escape from the herd, for example into a forest, but there is no place for them there either. Not only Michael K had such longings but there are few who realise them so literally.

In a moral, human, communist society Michael K just the same as his mother should be taken under care. His harelip should be operated on plastically. If he collapses he should be spoon-fed (collapsed people are often too weak to raise a spoon to their mouth) and induced by some friendly group of colleagues to be active in social life, just as suicides are rescued.

And those who are oppressors should also be brought under control and care taken of them too because they are dangerous and unhappy and do not feel the beauty of the world and life. They may be strong by authority or weapons, but they are often also unemotional, irritable, coarse, narrow-minded although sometimes intelligent in a narrow way. To exhaust the classification, the very weak people are not necessarily unemotional or narrow-minded. Some psychological education is needed.

RACISM AND THE 'CIVILISING MISSION' OF THE COLONISTS

From P. Nto

Dear Editor,

The ideology of racism emerged with the epoch of capitalism. In pre-capitalist societies such as the slave societies in Egypt, Rome and Greece the slave-owners had no racist ideology. Those who were forced to become slaves were merely contemptuously labelled barbarians. Slaves were regarded as people born to minister to the needs of the slave-owners. Their brutal oppression was not justified by skin colour. Even Plato, the arch-representative of the ideology of the slave-owning class, did not use race in justifying oppression. According to Plato, rulers were rulers because God gave them gold and those who helped them to oppress the slaves were given silver by God, while the oppressed ones on the land and other working people received iron.[1] Plato represents an elitist theory and not a racial one.

With the emergence of capitalism in the world, "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt",[2] as Karl Marx put it, the picture changed. The European colonial powers needed a convenient theory to justify their robbery and plunder of the wealth of the inhabitants of the continents which they began to divide among one another — places far from them in Africa, Asia and America.

Karl Marx had this epoch in mind when he wrote:

> "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, the enslavement and entombment of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production"[3]

In our times any talk of racism cannot be complete without mention of racist South Africa, where racism is the policy of the state. This country's brutal and barbaric racial oppression and exploitation have been described as a crime against humanity!

The apologists of colonialism put forward the hypocritical story that colonialism is in the interests of the colonised people and that colonialism brought civilisation. We in South Africa know what came out of the civilising policies of Sir George Grey and many others. We cannot be fooled by the "christian western civilisation". Indeed we cannot but agree with Marx:

> "The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked."[4]

Today we know the society which the rising bourgeoisie created in North America in the name of human rights and in France in the name of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity. We do not question the sincerity of the rising bourgeoisie as fighters for human rights and equality, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that human rights and freedom for all arose historically and that they are merely a reflection of the class interests of the bourgeoisie.

Apartheid South Africa is a typical example of this hypocrisy. Calvinism may have played a progressive role as an ideological weapon in earlier times but today the effects of Calvinism as practised by the South African racists are appalling and inhuman. Calvinism was a theory developed and propagated to justify the material interests of the rising bourgeoisie and for us in South Africa the practical meaning of Calvinism is that the racist fanatics regard themselves as predestined to oppress and exploit us.

Reflecting the changing times, the racists are not talking of spreading "civilisation " but rather of defending Africa against the "spread of communism". Whatever their change in tactics, their strategy remains the same — the perpetuation of the exploitation of the black people by the racist white ruling class.

Footnotes

1. **Plato:** *Der Staat* (Leipzig 1978)
2. K. Marx: *Capital I* (Moscow/London 1970) p.760
3. K. Marx: *Capital I* (Moscow/London 1970) p.751
4. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* Vol. I p.498

retaliation the enemy is reviving old methods of divide and rule. They are attempting to buy the Indians and the Coloureds, they are creating a black middle class and continuing with the enforcement of the bantustans. The National Forum Committee has been formed and the defunctUnity Movement has reappeared and been allowed to function.

There are still people who feel that the Freedom Charter is an outdated document. They want a new document of their own, drafted without the full participation of the masses by a few black intellectuals. These people say the whites cannot be our compatriots and they wage the struggle on colour lines.

Some of our black intellectuals have been influenced by the American bourgeois culture and black power movements. Inside South Africa blacks have easy access to American books, films, records and, of course, American propaganda. They read about civil rights organisations but never about the Communist Party of the U.S.A. That is why many of them still advocate black consciousness theories.

Apartheid gives the bourgeoisie high profits through cheap labour. South Africa is a highly developed capitalist state moving towards its last dangerous phase — imperialism.

Lenin exhorted everyone at all costs to set out to learn so that we can understand our struggle. He wanted this learning to become part of our very being and actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life. We must not allow the enemy to use us in order to achieve its aims. We must not build many organisations but strive rather to build one strong united front based on genuine political principles. This means the liquidation of the racist regime and the creation of a democratic South Africa free of the exploitation of man by man.

In every revolution it is a fact that the exploiter will never submit to the majority. It will hold on to its advantages until the last desperate battle. The exploiters have the advantage of capital, mass media, the army and security. But they don't have the support of the people. For this reason they are trying to win the Indians and Coloureds and to build a black middle class.

It is not surprising that the Labour Party has given in. It is led by petty bourgeois elements and these elements vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties that the revolution presents. The leadership of the struggle must be in the hands of well-tested and experienced revolutionary workers.

The SACP and the ANC have laid a solid foundation in our country. For this reason the panic-stricken regime and its American allies would like to see these organisations destroyed. But that is not possible, just as the enemy can never stop the sun from rising in the East.

The so-called "non-aggression pacts" must not discourage us. In fact they must unite us, make us stronger. We will not get our freedom on a plate. We must fight for it until we win. The enemy must not be given the chance to manipulate and divide us. Petty quarrels that exist must be resolved, including those in the trade union movement — within MWASA and and SAAWU.

At this time we must all consciously organise, mobilise and unite, irrespective of colour or race. We must raise the flag of the SACP and the ANC yet higher and we must frustrate the enemy's manoeuvres. Unity is strength.

Boy Moremi

TORTURED TO DEATH

Dear Editor,

Every time a political detainee is done to death by the security police we should be reminded that he is not the first, for torture of such a one is not an isolated instance, but part of the normal police pattern.

At the same time, we need to be reminded that it is not only political opponents who are murdered, the motive of the murderers being to extract information that they consider important, but the scores of ordinary prisoners, detained, or awaiting trial, die in their cells at the hands of the police every year, and unless the number is asked for by means of a parliamentary question, nothing is heard of them. The police feel that they have the right to bully anyone in their power and are supported in this by the State.

What happened in Bultfontein in 1963 should not be forgotten because it happened long ago, or because the prisoner who died was only an African labourer and no one of importance about whom there might be an international outcry. Yet, if he could be murdered, simply because the police thought he knew where a missing R13.30 might be hidden, how much more likely is it that people like Neil Aggett are murdered.

In the Bultfontein case Isak Magaise was “sjambokked, given electric shocks while trussed in a seated position, partially choked & suffocated when his head was tied in a plastic bag”, until he died. One of the accused policemen admitted that “he had learnt how to use a plastic bag to suffocate suspects to make them admit the crime during his police experience”, and that “he doubted whether there was a police station in the country that did not use these methods.” His partner admitted assaulting Magaise with a sjambok.

The Speaker refused a debate in the House of Assembly and the Minister of Justice refused an inquiry into police methods.

When there is an inquest into the death of a political detainee the police are never convicted or sentenced and they never admit to anything but the most correct behaviour. Perhaps there was a reason why the five accused in the Bultfontein trial were convicted and sentenced, though the sentences were light, and even the most severely sentenced was released on parole after only 2 years — while the family of Magaise starved.

Torture is not just aimed at political opponents, but is part of the daily, hourly pattern of terrorism, harassment, bullying, power-displaying of those in power, as represented by the police, over those struggling to become free.

Anti-fascist

DOCUMENTS

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The new constitutional dispensation which has just come into force was formulated in 1976 in response to the upsurge of popular resistance and the intensifying struggle for liberation. The outlines of the current dispensation were first made public in 1977 but government recognition of the need to develop the political structures of apartheid have their origins as far back as the 1960s when existing structures began to show their inadequacies and started to break down.

Breakdown of Old Structures

In the 1960s direct administration of black people in urban areas by white authorities was partly replaced by a system in which an intermediate layer of segregated black political bodies administered segregated black communities. They did so on behalf of and under the supervision and control of white authorities, at both local or central government levels. The bantustan 'authorities' were largely set up in the 1960s on a basis laid by the statutory recognition of tribal authorities in 1951.

The segregated political systems failed to win substantial support from the communities they were created for. Urban local authorities became increasingly isolated. A growth of alternative democratic community-based organisations brought the apartheid-created institutions under further pressure, particularly at the local level, and exposed them either as powerless to advance black interests or as agents of apartheid. The inability of the bantustans to develop any viable economic base has been recognised for a long time by the regime itself.

The apartheid regime recognised that the system was inadequate to serve its purposes even before 1976. The Theron Commission of Inquiry Into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group was appointed in 1973. It recommended, among other things, that provision should be made for satisfactory forms of direct Coloured representation and decision-making at the various levels of authority and government. It suggested that the Westminster type of government might have to be altered to meet the particular requirements of South African society.

The political systems set up for the Coloured and Indian groups were brought to a state of disintegration in the last two years of their operation. The Coloured Representative Council was dissolved in 1980 over its refusal to give its support to the constitutional plans, and its refusal to agree to the involvement of Coloured schools in the 1981 Republican celebrations. A plan to replace it by a wholly nominated Coloured Persons Council was dropped after Labour Party opposition to it. Opposition to the SAIC was demonstrated adequately in the boycott of the SAIC elections in 1981.

When the Urban Bantu Council system collapsed in 1977 in the face of the opposition of Soweto students, it was already due to be replaced by the Community Council system. But the events of 1976 and 1977, as well as the boycotts of 1980 accelerated the search for a solution.

Development of the Constitution

Two guiding principles shaped the constitution as it now stands:

— the exclusion of the African majority from any political participation except through the bantustan system:

— the attempt to draw non-African black groups into an alliance with whites, on white terms and under white control.

The new constitution has passed through a number of stages: formulation in Cabinet Committees in 1976; adoption by the National Party in 1977; submission to parliament in 1979; withdrawal from parliament and reference to the Schlebusch Commission of Enquiry in 1979; partial implementation in 1980 with the establishment of the President's Council; the reaffirmation by the Prime Minister in 1981; approval by the white electorate of the new Constitution Act in November 1983; Coloured and Indian elections in August 1984.

Despite all these stages the currently adopted constitution is remarkably similar to the proposals adopted by the National Party in 1977. It was proposed at that time that the white, Coloured and Indian communities would each have its own parliament, which would legislate on matters pertaining exclusively to the group concerned, for example on education and housing. Matters of mutual concern would be dealt with by a Council of Cabinets on which all three racial groups would be represented, legislation being adopted by consensus wherever possible. Ultimate power would be with an elected Executive State President. The principle of proportional representation would be applied in regard to the membership of all the new bodies to be created, using the ratio of 4:2:1.

Inadequacies of the New Constitution

While some minor technical amendments have been made, the recently inaugurated constitution remains largely unaltered since that time. What is now becoming increasingly clear is that even in the terms of the apartheid regime the new constitutional dispensation is already outdated. In the light of continued protest over the past year the regime is now desperately looking for further constitutional outlets to contain the developing situation.

This was given recognition after the white referendum in November 1983. Immediately after the referendum a Cabinet Committee met to discuss strategy in relation to constitutional developments. Two concerns dominated government thinking: ensuring that sections of the Coloured and Indian communities were drawn into and remained committed to the segregated system; and, most important, the finding of ways of containing, within the structure of apartheid, the political demands of Africans.

The search for a solution to the political demands of urban Africans was reaffirmed after the August 1984 elections. Precise details of what the government has in mind have never been made known but indications are that more powers are to be granted to urban administrations and that some of these might even be elevated to municipal status. There has been some talk of granting a broad common citizenship to all South Africans and an abandonment of the traditional Nationalist view that the logical conclusion of separate development was that all Africans would end up with the citizenship of independent bantustans. A fourth chamber for urban Africans in the new parliament has been ruled out, as well as one-person-one-vote of course. Undoubtedly a constitutional solution for urban Africans is a priority of the apartheid regime but a solution within the given framework is impossible.

It is clear that the government has no real solutions to the dilemmas that it has created. Their acceptance of the results of the recent elections as a mandate to go ahead with the new constitution proves this. The statistics of the election showed a clear rejection of the new system but this has been ignored.

It is the mere fact that an election was held that is being used to legitimise their actions.

How the New Constitution Will Work

Apart from the three parliaments, the most notable feature of the new constitutional set-up is the almost dictatorial powers given to the head of the new system — the Executive State President.

The State President is not only head of government but also head of state, with the powers of both. There is no Prime Minister and the State President is no longer supposedly above party politics. Although the president will not have a seat in parliament or be a cabinet minister with a portfolio, the office confers tremendous power and will be the nerve-centre of the country's executive authority.

The state president is elected by an electoral college of 50 selected members of the white parliament, 25 from the Coloured parliament and 13 from the Indians. In theory anyone from the three houses may be elected president but in practice the white majority will ensure that the president is always white and a member of the majority white party. The state president's office is held for five years which is the normal life of a parliament. The president can only be forced to resign if all three houses pass motions of no confidence.

As head of government the president is both chairman and member of the cabinet which he appoints and dismisses at his pleasure. Anyone from among the three population groups may be appointed for cabinet posts and there is no limit to how many may be appointed. Cabinet ministers will be the heads of state departments.

The state president, in consultation with the cabinet, is the executive authority for what is known as general affairs, or matters affecting all population groups. The distinction between 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' is the nub of the new system.

'Own affairs' are defined as matters which specifically or differentially affect a population group in relation to the maintenance of its identity and upholding and furthering its way of life, culture, traditions and customs. More specifically these include social welfare, education, art, culture recreation, health, community development including housing, local government, agriculture and finance in relation to own affairs.

'General Affairs' are all matters 'which are not own affairs of a population group.' They include finance, foreign affairs, justice, defence, manpower, transport and internal affairs.

When there is doubt as to whether a matter is an own affair or a general affair the state president is the final arbiter. Bills on general affairs have to be passed in all houses of parliament but to ensure that the same version is passed in all three each matter is referred to a joint committee which consists of representatives of the majority parties and opposition parties in all three houses. Although there is no formula for the composition of such committees, it is likely that the majority party of the white house, namely, the Nationalists, will dominate. The joint committees are supposed to reach consensus but if they don't the state president may refer the matter to the President's Council to decide. Since this too is dominated by whites of the Nationalist Party it will still be Nationalist Party policy that ultimately gets approved at general affairs level.

It is clear from the aforegoing that the new constitution is just another way of perpetuating apartheid. At every level safeguards are built in to ensure a white and Nationalist majority.

Robert Fuller

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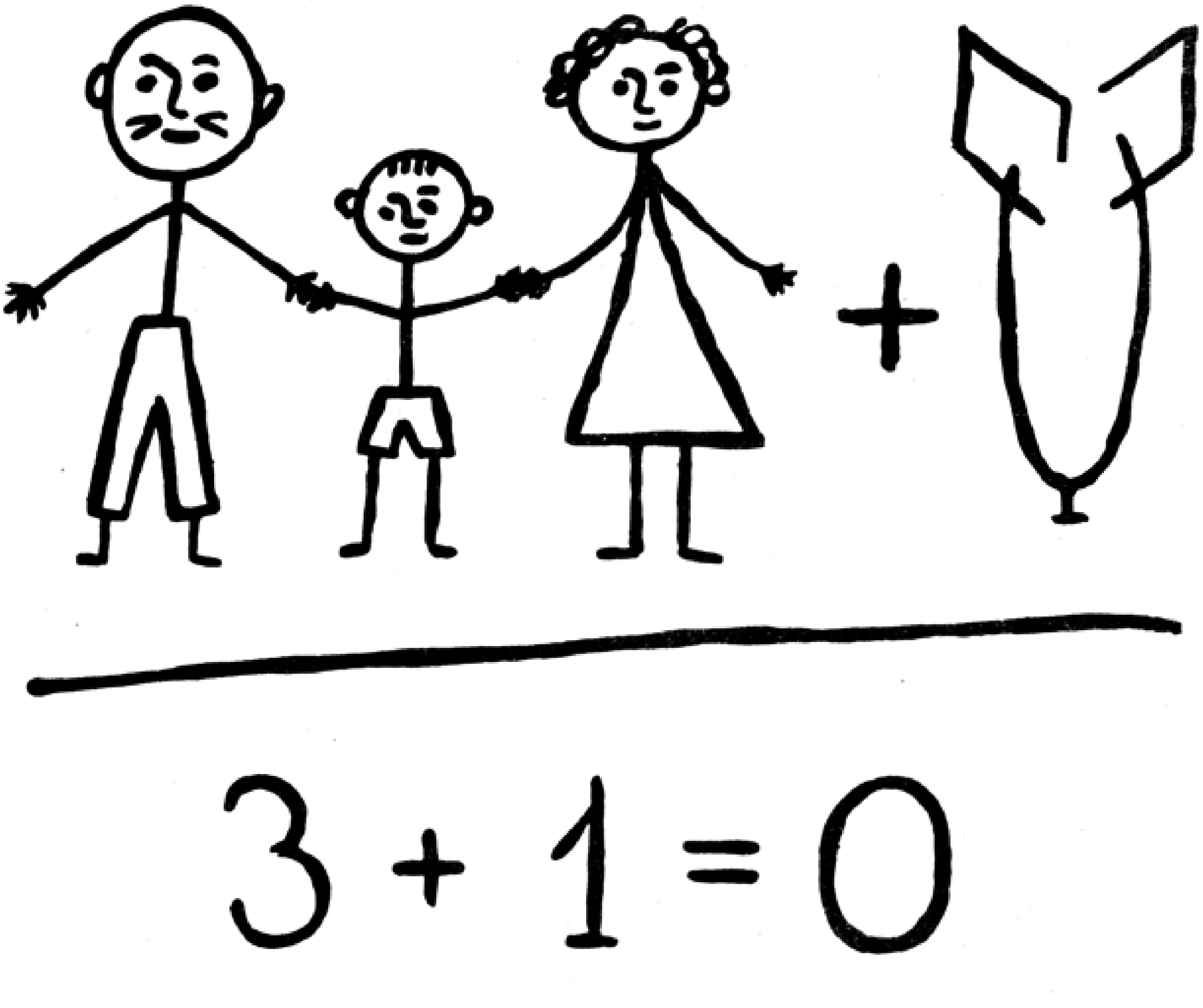

Drawing by Liza Chvoshevskaya, aged 14, from Leningrad

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